



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## THESIS

**THE DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY  
STAKES IN KAZAKHSTAN**

By

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December 2004

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**THE DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY STAKES IN  
KAZAKHSTAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The evolution of Kazakhstan's security policies since independence, and particularly after September 11, 2001, indicates that the country has chosen to play an active role in regional and international security as a means to security its own national interests. It has opened to the West, and played an active role in the War on Terrorism. It has also worked to maintain Central Asia's regional security architecture. These policies have had some demonstrable affect on national, regional and international security, but as a young state in a troubled region Kazakhstan will require increased Western assistance if it is to become the force for stability that it seeks to be.

Kazakhstan has a very important geopolitical location, and can play a role of a regional leader in Central Asia, but it is still a very young state and needs a strong support. "Perhaps nowhere was the granting of independence more bittersweet and the challenges of sustaining it more complex than in the case of Kazakhstan."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mathews, Jessica T. Foreword in "Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise" by Olcott, Martha Brill, Washington D.C. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze developments in Kazakhstan's security policy since independence, and to determine how the West, and the U.S. in particular, can best support Kazakhstan's security building efforts for mutual benefit. It argues that U.S. policy toward Kazakhstan has been, and will continue to be, a key factor in addressing domestic, regional, and international security challenges in Central Asia; even though the role of Russia is still remaining a significant factor in influencing Kazakhstan's security development, and China wants to play its own card in determining regional security policy.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that Kazakhstan's security policies affect national, regional, and international security, but the size of this phenomenon is determined largely by level and type of foreign assistance, particularly of the US. Thus, an analysis and assessment are made of the implications of the deployment of US forces into the region in support of operation ENDURING FREEDOM. This will also seek to consider the potential impact on the security environment of either a U.S. withdrawal, or its continued forward basing in Central Asia. It is considered alongside the traditional security role played by the Russian Federation and growing role of the People's Republic of China.

## **B. BACKGROUND**

Kazakhstan has mutual borders with China (in the East) and Russia (in the North). It is also very closely located to Afghanistan and Iraq, India and Pakistan (in the South) and shares the Caspian Sea with Iran (in the West). The region of Central Asia and its neighboring countries covers half of the world's territory, half of the world's population, half of the world's nuclear power, and a bulk of world instability. Kazakhstan with its growing economy and natural resources is situated right in the middle of the region, in the center of the circle of instability.

The level of international interest in this vast nation, which is two-thirds the size of the continental United States, has steady increased over time. While the claims that Central Asia will be a second Persian Gulf may turn

out to be vast exaggerations, the Caspian basin reserves remain a potentially enormous windfall for western energy companies and, with Russia, could serve as an important alternative to the Persian Gulf.”<sup>2</sup>

However, the surrounding region contains centers of weapons proliferation, drug trafficking and radical anti-American and anti-Western terrorism. Consequently, it is not surprising that in Testimony to Congress on October 29, 2003 Elizabeth Jones, the U.S. Assistance Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, and former Ambassador of the United States in the Republic of Kazakhstan emphasized the importance of supporting security developments in Kazakhstan and in Central Asia.<sup>3</sup>

The following are the factors that have influenced developments of Kazakhstan’s security policy:

- The social and economic instability the country confronted;
- The success in generating economic recovery and then growth;
- The country’s evolving security environment and arrangements;
- The size and quality of the Soviet legacy force;
- The experience-level of the officer corps.

The importance of supporting security developments in Kazakhstan and Central Asia is underlined in much of the recent literature (H. Plater-Zybek, *Kazakhstan: Security and Defense Challenges*, K35, Conflict Studies Research Center, Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, September 2002). How to accomplish this goal has received far less attention (Roy Allison, *Regional Threats and Prospects for Multilateral Defense Cooperation*, NBR Conference August 2003). By analyzing Kazakhstan’s own security policy, and its impact on regional security and the Global War on Terrorism, the thesis identifies areas where U.S. support is particularly critical, and thus provides a framework for how the U.S. can best reach its policy goals.

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<sup>2</sup> Olcott, Martha Brill, “Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise,” Washington D.C., Carnegie.

<sup>3</sup> A. Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, “Testimony before the Subcommittee on Middle East and Central Asia,” *House International Relations Committee*, October 29, 2003, <http://www.state.gov>, accessed April 2004.

Special attention is paid to the internal reforms in the sphere of security in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan, following the multi-vector foreign policy, which is not focused on developing close cooperation with one particular country or a region, but on using any opportunity that may strengthen stability and prosperity of the Republic of Kazakhstan, has not dedicated many resources for the Armed Forces development. Military expenditures in the country (0.9% of the state budget) are the lowest in the region and on the whole post-Soviet space. The equipment that Kazakhstan Army uses is mostly old Soviet equipment, which doesn't match the plans of building small, but mobile and well-equipped Armed Forces. The findings of the thesis appear to suggest that Kazakhstan, beside developing good relations with its partners, and seeking their assistance, should make some changes in economic support of its military reforms.

Theoretical studies of international security cooperation usually analyze systemic explanations as opposed to studying domestic political, economic and social variables. Recent examinations of post-Soviet security in Central Asia tend to examine the impact of external actors on interstate cooperation. The nature and intensity of regional security problems of militant Islam, drug trafficking and illegal migration, according to these views are more or less similar among all five Central Asian republics. This research focuses on the impact of foreign assistance on Kazakhstan's security developments. There is an appreciable tendency in the literature on security in Central Asia and in Kazakhstan in particular to focus on the nature of political and economic developments in the states, the expansion of foreign assistance, and cooperation development with other nations in the area of security. For example, Gleason (2003) claims that states with pro-reformist economies are more likely to cooperate on security issues. Likewise, statist economies, or those dominated by policies of extraction, prevent development of security relations with other states. The question is to what group does Kazakhstan belong? I believe that the country has recently shifted from the latter to the former. This shift is reflected in the literature on Kazakhstan's development since independence.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited the old Soviet state and economy structure. This fact explains why during the first years of the independence Kazakhstan tried to keep and develop relations with the former Soviet republics, and, first of all, with Russia. Martha Olcott argues that even nowadays Russia still remains

Kazakhstan's dominant partner, as far as security is concerned. Her arguments are supported by the fact that in March 2000 the President of Kazakhstan signed an accord with Russia and Kyrgyzstan to organize a joint air defense system to advance the development of a joint air defense system for the CIS. As part of this agreement, Russia supplies Kazakhstan with fighter jets and missile defense systems. At the end of the year 2002 President Nazarbayev stated, "I never tired of repeating that Russia is Kazakhstan's closest ally, because this is the way the fate of our peoples has taken shape. This is the way geography and history ordered it."<sup>4</sup>

The author agrees that Russian factor plays and will continue to play an important role in Kazakhstan's security developments, but meanwhile, he believes that in the new century Kazakhstan made a slight shift in its foreign policy to the West. After the September 11 events Kazakhstan started building better-equipped, mobile armed forces and conducting military reform, which is reflected in Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Armed Forces Reform, signed on May 7, 2003. The new military reform required new approaches, new views on training and new equipment, which is compatible with NATO standards. So, Kazakhstan had to reconsider its views on international cooperation in the area of security. "In this context, Astana, like its neighbors, will attempt to benefit from the West, whilst remaining open to the overtures of Moscow."<sup>5</sup>

Later, in the same article Roger McDermott states that

Kazakhstan's participation in the CST and SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organization] are factors that influence its political desire for military reform. The increased levels of U.S. military aid and cooperation have joined these factors. Astana clearly wishes to benefit from these developments, enhancing its antiterrorist capabilities and securing new military hardware, regardless of its source. Modern equipment and weapons, however, will have little impact on the wider issue of the decay of its Armed Forces. If Astana seeks to play a greater future role in multinational peacekeeping, participate in CST or SCO security structures, and significantly enhance its antiterrorist capabilities, then it could realistically afford substantial downsizing in the Armed Forces. Savings

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<sup>4</sup> [www.president.kz](http://www.president.kz), accessed March 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Roger McDermott, "The Crisis in the Kazakh Armed Forces," *The Conflict Studies Research Center*, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley, June 2002, p. 6.

could be redirected toward professionalizing and training a military capable of meeting future threats. There is no evidence that such plans are under consideration.<sup>6</sup>

SCO brought to Central Asia another important player, the Chinese People's Republic. The growing role of the United States and China in the region reduced the traditional role of Russia in this sphere.

The reducing role of Russia on Kazakhstan's foreign policy, as well as on the policy of other Central Asian republics is mentioned by Allison Roy and Lena Johnson. They think that this process improved relations between the countries in the region. Reducing the role of Russia in Central Asia pushed the countries of the region to improve their own abilities in providing regional security. "Bilateral treaties and coordination efforts between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan dating back to 1992 were enlarged in the formation of a trilateral grouping including Kyrgyzstan in February 1994, which resolved to address, among other matters, water management, combating drug trafficking, and military cooperation."<sup>7</sup> The three states formally created a Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC). Tajikistan joined the CAEC in 1998. After the creation of the joint economic structure, the Central Asian nations started working on mutual security formations. As a result a Central Asian Peacekeeping battalion (CENTRASBAT) was formed. This idea was strongly supported and sponsored by the United States. Most of the authors see CENTRASBAT as a success of the U.S. policy in the region focused on strengthening cooperation between the central Asian countries. The author of this thesis thinks that the creation of the battalion, on the contrary, deepened the tensions between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The competition between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for the leading positions in the region led to a situation when the battalion ended its existence in the year 2000. The US assistance catalyzed this process.

As it was pointed earlier, China is also a power that influences security policy in the region. Oliver Roy argues that "Russia and the United States are the only powers that

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> "Central Asian Security: The New International Context," 2001.

wish or are able to develop policy towards Central Asia from a broad strategic perspective, which...carries the risk of generating alternative regional alignments”<sup>8</sup>. Even though he mentions China in his works, the role of this state is underestimated.

There is no doubt that foreign assistance and development relations with the main actors in the region in the area of security have a substantial impact on Kazakhstan’s views in building and structuring its armed forces. Meanwhile, some of the last articles (Erica Marat Iskakova “*Incoherency in Central Asian Security Policies: Alliances and Trade-offs*”, 2004 and Anders Aslund “*An Expanding Europe, in Decline*”, 2004) stress Kazakhstan’s significant economic growth. Taking into consideration all mentioned security concerns, Kazakhstan should rely not only on the foreign assistance in building stronger armed forces, but it would be logical to mark out more budget expenditures for this purpose.

Military budget is an important factor for developing armed forces, but stable economy is a factor that itself provides security. Nadir A. L. Mohammed, describing conflict prevention in his “*Civil Wars and Military Expenditures: A Note*”, stresses the importance of economy for security and conflict prevention, and gives the following six issues that should be considered for economy stabilization:

- Focus on investment in good governance;
- Promoting growth, poverty alleviation, environmental conservation and control of population growth;
- Equitable distribution of economic and natural resources;
- Public sector reforms and retrenchment including the military sector;
- The process of fiscal reforms should focus on fiscal decentralization;
- More regional and rural projects are needed.

Kazakhstan’s current stability and economic growth is mainly determined by the factors that the country succeeded in many of above-mentioned prescriptions. For instance, Umirserik Kasenov, former Director of Kazakhstan’s Institute of Strategic Studies describes the situation in Kazakhstan between 1991 and 1995 as very unstable. He emphasizes that there are several basic causes of this instability, including: (1) the

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<sup>8</sup> Roy, Oliver, “The New Central Asia,” New York University Press Washington Square, New York, 2000, pp. 191-192.

distribution of economic ties among the former Soviet republics following the breakup of the USSR; (2) the loss of market for sales and for suppliers of goods; (3) inflation; (4) the nonpayment phenomenon; (5) budget deficits; (6) high interest rates. By now, Kazakhstan, unlike its neighbors, has overcome these problems.<sup>9</sup>

### **C. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

Using the case study methodology, the thesis first tests the hypothesis that Kazakhstan's security policies (independent variable) have had a direct effect on national, regional, and international security (dependent variables). It is done by tracing the shifts in Kazakhstan's policy since independence, and attempting to correlate these with changes in national, regional, and international security. Then it demonstrates that U.S. cooperation (condition variable) has amplified the effect of the independent variable on each of the dependent variables. The research is based on the reviewing of the following sources:

- Books on the history of Kazakhstan's independence;
- Article and books on the current threats in the region;
- Article and books on Kazakhstan's security policy and international relations;
- Constitution, military doctrine and official document that determine the foreign policy of Kazakhstan;
- Speeches of the US, Kazakhstan and other nations officials;
- Official Internet sites of the US, Kazakhstan, NATO; and
- Internet sites and publications of other relevant official institutions, like the UN, OSCE, Shanghai Forum.

In addition, personal interviews with NATO officials conducted at NATO Headquarters, Kazakhstan MOD officials in Kazakhstan, U.S. OSD representatives in Washington D.C. and UK MOD representatives in London.

### **D. CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter I: Kazakhstan was unknown and closed to the rest of the world throughout its history until it became an independent state. The first decade of independence was very difficult for the country, but now it is beginning to play a more

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Sergei Ryzhakov, former chief of department in Kazakhstan' Institute for Strategic Studies, Almaty, September 2004.

and more important role on the international arena. So, in the beginning of the chapter, the significance of Kazakhstan is underlined. Then, the questions are listed and the methodology is outlined. Later, the chapter suggests the major findings of the study. Finally, it provides a summary of the following chapters.

Chapter II: This chapter examines the main security threats in Central Asia and Kazakhstan's security policy during the first decade of independence and after the September 11 events. It provides background of the threats in the region and Kazakhstan's concerns on the regional and global security issues and then outlines the policy of Kazakhstan as a reaction on those threats and concerns, and the influence of the policy on regional and global security.

Chapter III: This chapter reviews development of cooperation between Kazakhstan and other nations, including cooperation with NATO, UN and regional security structures. Special attention is paid to cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and how this relationship has amplified the positive effects of Kazakhstan's security policies. Finally, it summarizes the findings and evaluates the effectiveness of the last changes in Kazakhstan.

Chapter IV: This chapter offers conclusions and a summary of the research. Then it proposes recommendations in the area of security for how the U.S. and Kazakhstan might further extend their relationship for mutual benefit.

## **II. SECURITY DEVELOPMENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

### **A. KAZAKHSTAN AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE**

State collapse is a deeper phenomenon than mere rebellion, coup, or riot. It refers to a situation where the structure, authority, law, and political order have fallen apart and must be reconstituted in some form, old or new... It is the collapse of old orders... that brings about the retreat to ethnic nationalism as the residual, viable identity.<sup>10</sup>

The collapse of the Great Empire of the Soviet Union in 1991 completely changed the world, and the security environment. As a result, many conflicts arose all over the world. One can disagree with this, and say that Rwanda, Ethiopia, Congo, Bosnia, Afghanistan etc are the results of riots or ethnic nationalism. The author argues that those are the effects of the world bipolar system change after the end of the Cold War.

The dissolution of the USSR changed, first of all, the geography of the Union. The author would divide the toppled Empire into the following five geopolitical regions: Russia itself, European part, Baltic States, the Caucuses, and Central Asia. All of them have had their own conflicts; all of them have faced the problem of state building as well as the necessity of security building in a region and in their own countries. All of them have developed differently during the first decade of their independency. Some former USSR nations have overcome the stage of a failed state and the stage of war or crises; some are still struggling with these challenges.

Michael W. Doyle in the final part of his “War Making, Peace Making, and the United Nations” proposes three alternatives of peace making. The first one is “delegation to states... or a friends coalition of interested states.” The second is “the possibilities of regional peacekeeping.” And the third is establishment of “...a UN rapid reaction force.”<sup>11</sup> All these suggestions can be applied to security building in general. The thesis intends to demonstrate this process using the example of security building in Kazakhstan after becoming an independent state.

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<sup>10</sup> Zartman, William, “Posing the Problem of State Collapse” in *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, 1995, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Doyle Michael W., “War Making, Peace Making, and the United Nations” in *Turbulent Peace*, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, pp. 552-553.

The author met the final stage of the Great Empire of the Soviet Union dissolution in Moscow. The coup d'état, the parade of sovereignties, all these events didn't seem real that time. Neither author, not his classmates, young, promising Soviet officers, believed that in few months we would serve for different nations. It began to look real when the former Soviet republics decided to create their own armed forces, and started acting independently on international arena.

On December 12, 1991, the presidents of the five Central Asian Soviet Republics – Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, Rakhmon Nabiev of Tajikistan, Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan, Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan, and Saparmurat Niyazov of Turkmenistan – sat down together in Ashgabat, the capital city of Turkmenistan, to discuss the crisis that had erupted a continent away. Four days earlier presidents Boris Yeltsin of Russia, Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine, and Stanislav Shushkevich of Belarus had signed the Minsk Treaty, which formally disbanded the Soviet Union and created a new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Slavic presidents had not bothered to consult with their counterparts in Central Asia before taking this momentous step.

As I watched the presidents arrive at Ashgabat airport that cold, snowy evening, I could detect even from distance their sense of anger, betrayal, and frustration. They knew that the Russia on which they had come to depend had now abandoned them. Since the August 1991 coup attempt against President Mikhail Gorbachev, the Central Asian leaders had been in the forefront of the hard-liners, demanding that a strong center be preserved even as the Soviet Union was dissolving. They were deeply concerned that the republics' security, economics, and social services – all of which were completely enmeshed with Russia's – would be destroyed if the Soviet Union fell apart. Now it had happened.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of their meeting, the Central Asian leaders announced that the republics would be willing to join the CIS as long as they were granted complete equality with the other member nations. In fact, they begged Russia to let them into the new group. Ten days later, on December 21, 1991, in Almaty, then the capital of Kazakhstan, a new CIS was formed, comprising eleven of the fifteen former Soviet republics. (The three Baltic republics and Georgia refused to join the Commonwealth).

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<sup>12</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia," *Yale University Press, USA*, 2002, p. 44.

Between these two historical meeting in Ashgabat and in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the last among the Soviet republics declared its independence. “Adoption on October 25, 1990 “Declaration on State Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan” by the highest representative body of the Republic became a turning point in Kazakhstan’s development. Kazakhstan legalized its right to be a subject of law on December 16, 1991 adopting the Constitutional Law “On State Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan”.

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Unfortunately, the declaration of independence didn’t bring instant stability and prosperity. The distinguished Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, describing crisis in his country, wrote,

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenges of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership.<sup>14</sup>

In some ways, Kazakhstan was never as fortunate as Nigeria because it is a landlocked state that began independence with a seriously damaged environment, since it had been a state where the Soviet Union had conducted tests of nuclear weapons, as well as biological and chemical weapons. The legacy of colonial rule in Kazakhstan was much more uneven than that in Nigeria.

By millions of threads, from electricity grids to oil pipelines to roads and military bases, the republic was tied to Russia. The industry and agriculture depended on Russian imports, while its own export went mainly to Russian markets. Every international telephone line to Kazakhstan went through Moscow. The republic had no independent armed forces.

The leadership of the country dreaded independence from Russia as much as the most native Kazakhs welcomed it. That time they faced the prospect of running an autonomous state and would have to deal with problems of inflation, job creation,

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<sup>13</sup> “Foreign Policy Pursued by Kazakhstan,” <http://www.president.kz/main/>, accessed March 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Chinua Achebe, “The Trouble with Nigeria,” London: Heinemann, 1983, p. 1.

economic development, foreign policy, and security. The crisis they faced worsened when millions of Russians, who held critical jobs in the army, bureaucracy, and the economic sectors of the republic, began to migrate back to Russia. An enormous management crisis blew up in the country.

Another challenge was the issue of dealing with public expectations about political freedom, free expression, democracy, and Islam. Gorbachev's attempts to open up the Soviet system had exposed peoples of the Soviet Union, including Kazakhstan, to new political ideas and new religious trends. Amongst the ideas taking hold in the country were Western-style democracy, advocated by Russians liberals and influenced by the struggles of the Baltic republics; Pan-Turkism, whose adherents hoped to create a unified Turkic state from the borders of China to Turkey; free market capitalism; and Islamic fundamentalism, which sought to impose Sharia.

## **B. INTERNAL AND REGIONAL SECURITY THREATS**

### **1. Ethnic Problems**

All mentioned problems which the leadership of Kazakhstan faced at the beginning of 1990s reflect the main threats for national security. Most of the threats had a regional character, all Central Asian leaders had to deal with them. The main internal problem for Kazakhstan that was not so strongly expressed in the other states of the region has been the complexity of ethnic composition.

By the time when the Soviet Union collapsed, according to the USSR Central Statistic Department, 32.6 % of the population on the territory of Kazakhstan were Kazakhs, and 42.4% were Russians.<sup>15</sup> These data cannot be accurate, because from the author observation, in the urban areas Kazakh people often married non-Kazakhs, and the parents in mixed marriages often registered their children as not Kazakhs. On the contrary, the statisticians tried to keep the number of ethnic populations in the Soviet Republics higher. However, even these contradictions demonstrate how Russian and Kazakh peoples are intermixed.

Moreover, a hundred other ethnic groups, including Germans, Chechens, Koreans, Tatars and Chinese inhabited the country, making ethnic relations the most pressing

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<sup>15</sup> Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie SSSR, "Chislennost' i sostav naseleniia SSSR," Moscow, 1984.

political problem facing the republic. Today Kazakhs hold a slim majority, largely because some ethnic groups, such as Russians and Germans, have returned to their native lands. Their departure has shrunk the total population by 8 percent.

The two largest ethnic communities, the Russo-Slavs and the Kazakhs, view the birth of independent Kazakhstan in totally different ways. To the Kazakhs, the creation of Kazakhstan is the fulfillment of a dream that they had not even dared to entertain, whereas Kazakhstan's Slavic population generally views it as a cruel twist of fate. The tensions between these two worldviews might under certain circumstances be sufficient to destroy the new state.

Most local Russians before independence identified with Kazakhstan primarily territorially, lacking both an ethnic and a political content. Such an identity certainly brought with it no sense of a need to know the Kazakhs' history or learn their language. At independence less than 1% of Russians in the republic knew Kazakh. Independence has given this identity a political dimension, but the Russians' identification still lacks an ethnic dimension. Kazakhstan's Russians want to enjoy the same status as Kazakhstan's Kazakhs and Russia's Russians. They argue that the Russian language should be fully equal to the Kazakh language and that nationality should play no role in republic's public life. To most of the republic's Russians, Kazakhstan is the multiethnic home for all those who live in Kazakhstan, regardless of ethnicity, and there should be no ethnic privilege in such state.

The Kazakhs, however, see Kazakhstan as their homeland, the territory of their fathers, into which the Russians intruded and long dominated but to which they acquired no long-term rights. To the Kazakhs, the Russians must either accept that they are now subjects of a Kazakh-dominated state and so teach their children Kazakh, live on streets renamed to honor Kazakh heroes, send their children to the Kazakh army, and take Kazakh citizenship or return to Russia, their historic homeland across the border.

The President of the country, Nursultan Nazarbayev is too cautious a politician to express an opinion openly.

Indeed he frequently stresses the republic's multinational heritage, particularly as concerns have grown about the continued brain drain of talented, well-trained Russians whose loss will seriously affect the republic's economy. He extended by one year the deadline by which residents must declare their citizenship (to 1995), and he promised to modify the republic's language laws, perhaps, even raising Russian to the status of Kazakh. However, on the issue that matters most too many of Kazakhstan's Russians – the right to dual citizenship – Nazarbayev has been unaccommodating; Kazakhstan's Russian must choose between the two citizenships.

Nazarbayev's position is certainly legitimate according to international law and practice, but local Russians see it as yet another form of prejudice. Moreover, more than 70% of all Nazarbayev's senior appointments have been ethnic Kazakhs, and about 80% of his presidential apparatus is made of Kazakhs as well. More than 60% of the legislators in the parliament are ethnic Kazakhs, in part because voting districts are gerrymandered to create Kazakh pluralities or majorities wherever possible. In addition, 90% of the government are filled with Kazakhs.<sup>16</sup>

One of the most controversial things Nazarbayev has done to curb separatist tendencies amongst the Russian population is move the capital from the large and beautiful nineteenth-century city of Almaty, in the far east, to Astana, a small village in the center of the country adjacent to the belt of Russian settlers in the north, allocating massive funds to build a new city. The move has drained the sorely tried economy of Kazakhstan without significantly undermining the Russian and Cossack extremists, who demand to be allowed either to form a separate state or to rejoin Russia. Nor has appeased Kazakh ultranationalist, who call for an end to Russian influence and the use of the Russian language.<sup>17</sup>

Kazakhstan's constitution is ambiguous about the state's ethnic nature. The document endorses multinationalism but at the same time asserts the Kazakhs' historic claims to their present territory. Only Kazakhs have automatic rights to citizenship; local Russians were not even guaranteed citizenship for family members until the spring of 1994. The constitution also has a right of return for foreign Kazakhs, paying for their resettlement with state funds.<sup>18</sup> More than half a million Kazakhs have returned to the

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<sup>16</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "The Kazakh," *Hoover Institution Press*, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1995, Preface, p. 290.

<sup>17</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia," *Yale University Press, USA*, 2002, p. 60.

<sup>18</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.ecostan.org/laws/kaz/kazakhstanconst.html>, accessed August 2004.

republic, half from within the CIS, half from China and Mongolia, where about one-third of the Kazakhs are said to have repatriated from. The repatriates have settled in the predominantly Russian oblasts (regions) of northern Kazakhstan, hoping to influence the demographic balance. These Mongolian and Chinese know no Russian, and their Kazakh is very different from the Kazakh language Kazakhstan's Kazakhs speak. They live much as their ancestors did a century ago, making the impact of this "Kazakhification" even greater psychologically than it is numerically.

Although not openly supporting them, President Nazarbayev has not suppressed Kazakh nationalists' effort to ban abortion to Kazakh women and to disproportionately improve state benefits for Kazakh women and children. As a consequence of these and other processes, time is on the Kazakhs' side, demographically. Although their birthrate has nearly halved in the past twenty years, Kazakh families are on average twice as large as local Russian ones. In the beginning of 1990s, Kazakh demographers predicted that by 2010 the Kazakhs would in the majority in the republic, but with Russian out-migration and Kazakh in-migration this could occur even earlier. Kazakhstan's official demographic figures indicate that by the end of the last century Kazakhs, although the largest ethnic group (44.3%), are still numerically inferior to the combined totals of the "Russian speakers" (Russian, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and Germans), who make up 45.6 % of the state.<sup>19</sup>

This statistic does not take into consideration the fact that about 25% of Kazakhs do not speak their native language.

The choices facing Kazakhstan's Russian population have not changed since independence. Essentially Kazakhstan's Russians can either leave the republic, ask the Kazakhstan government for better treatment, urge Russia to pressure Kazakhstan, or quietly accept their fate.

"About 183,200 people took the first option (leaving the republic) in 1992, followed by 333,000 people in 1993, and 400,000 in 1994."<sup>20</sup> The greatest outmigration of Russians has come from the predominantly Kazakh regions, in large part because of the existing language laws, which mandate Kazakh as the exclusive official language in places with a majority of Kazakhs. There has been a much smaller drop in the Russian

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<sup>19</sup> Panorama, no. 28 (July 16, 1998): p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Krasnaia Zvezda, June 1, 1994, p. 3.

population in the northern regions, but the figures are misleading because they record only total Russian population, not movement. Many Russians leaving southern and western regions have moved north; in addition, despite efforts to stop them, between 50,000 and 100,000 Russians a year have been moving into the republic, many from elsewhere in Central Asia.

For the moment most of Kazakhstan's Russians are remaining where they are, which does not mean that they are quietly accepting their fate. In general, having them stay suits both the Russian and the Kazakhstan government, neither of which wishes to have a large Russian exodus. Kazakhstan can ill afford the loss of many skilled people, especially those with intimate knowledge of the state's inner workings. For its part Russia has no desire to acquire responsibility for several million more Russians or to lose a degree of economic control over the new states that presence of ethnic Russians has hitherto provided it. Resident Russians, however, are unwilling to see themselves as subject to Kazakhs or their children's future blighted because educational favoritism shown to Kazakhs. There have been no firm statistical data on the subject, but it seems from personal observations that young Russians are reluctant to serve in a Kazakhstani army.

Thus,

there is nothing to suggest that a 'Kazakhstani' identity is likely to develop among the Russians. On the contrary, hostility between Europeans and Kazakhs seemed to be on the increase... Thus the idea and the very existence of a Kazakh state seems likely to be brought into question sooner or later, given the strong prevalence of the ethnic-nationalist identity over other possible models of the nation-state.<sup>21</sup>

Local Russians are pushing for other concessions that the Kazakh government is equally unwilling to entertain, the most important of which is some form of self-rule. Listed in ascending loss control and descending likelihood of adoption are four possible scenarios of self-rule: local election of oblast [region] heads (which Nazarbayev seems willing to entertain) combined with an increase in the scope of oblast authority (not currently under consideration); transforming the unitary state into a federation; reconfiguring the republic as a loose confederation of two

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<sup>21</sup> Roy, Oliver, "The New Central Asia," New York University Press Washington Square, NY, 2000, p. 177.

states, a northern, Russian one and a southern, Kazakh one...; and a separation into two parts, with the southern portion remaining Kazakhstan and the northern part either becoming independent... or joining with Russia.<sup>22</sup>

## **2. Islamic Extremism**

The difficulties of transitional period led to the rise of extremist opposition groups, as young Kazakhs and Uzbeks living in Kazakhstan join radical Islamic parties like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which ostensibly targets the government of Uzbekistan, but in reality fights on many fronts, and the less political – and less militant – Hizb ut-Tahrir, which seeks to impose Sharia.

Many Islamic movements emerged in Central Asia during the last days of the Soviet power and the first days after independence. The IMU was initiated a few months before the breakup of the Soviet Union in the town of Namangan, in the center of the Ferghana Valey, “when a handful of unemployed young men seized the building which housed the headquarters of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (CPU) after the mayor refused to give them land to build a mosque.”<sup>23</sup> That incident set in motion a series of events that have reverberated across Central Asia for the past 13 years.

With Saudi funds and some five thousand young followers, this group began in 1990 to build a new mosque and a madrassah in Namangan that would house two thousand students. In 1992 some activists of this movement fled to Tajikistan because of the suppressions and later set up the IMU. The IMU established bases in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, receiving support from United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and the Taliban, alongside which they fought. A severe clampdown back in Uzbekistan caused many followers to leave, and “by 2000 there were about 2,000 IMU fighters in Afghanistan. In 1999 and 2000, it [the IMU] launched attacks from its foreign bases. The war in Afghanistan in 2001, however, dealt the IMU a near-fatal blow. Its bases in northern

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<sup>22</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, “The Kazakh,” *Hoover Institution Press*, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1995, Preface, p. 292.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmed Rashid, “Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia,” *Yale University Press, USA*, 2002, p. 137.

Afghanistan were destroyed during a battle around Kunduz, it lost its main sponsor with the demise of Taliban, and its military commander Juma Namangani, is believed to dead.”<sup>24</sup>

It is thought to have some supporters left scattered around southern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan, but its days as an effective and well-organized terrorist group seem to be over for a while.

As far as the HT is concerned, one of the most intriguing questions is how a highly secretive, pan-Islamic movement that originated in the Middle East and largely does not even address pertinent issues of public concern in Central Asia has become the most popular, widespread underground movement in the region. The challenge that the HT poses to the regimes in Central Asian states can be judged by the fact that there are more HT prisoners in Central Asia’s prisons than those of any other movements, including the IMU.

HT leaders believe that Central Asia has reached what they call “a boiling point”, and is ripe for take over. According to Sheikh Abdul Quadeem Zaloom, the current HT leader, “The issue of transforming the lands into the Islamic homeland and uniting them with the rest of the Islamic lands is an objective which the Muslims aim to achieve and the method which ought to be undertaken to achieve this objective is that of re-establishing Khilafah [Caliphate].”<sup>25</sup>

The HT originated in the revivalist Wahhabi movement of Saudi Arabia, will be discussed later; however, the HT separated from the Wahhabis on several issues.

We had a united plan with the Wahhabis but we soon developed differences and split. HT wanted to work with people in each country separately and bring about Sharia in a peaceful manner, but the Wahhabis were extremists who wanted guerilla war and the creation of an Islamic army.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “A Survey of Central Asia,” *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Abdul Quadeem Zaloom, “How the Khilafah Was Destroyed,” *Lahore: HT Publication*, 1998, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Igor Rotar, “The Hizb ut-Tahrir Party in Central Asia: A Fault Line?,” *Jamestone Monitor*, May 1, 2001, p. 4.

The HT operates secret, decentralized five- to seven-man cells throughout Central Asia, making it extremely difficult for the authorities to penetrate the organization. The cells, called *daira* (circle), are study groups dedicated to the spread of Islam and the HT message. The cell chief is the only person who knows the next of the party organization. He sets out weekly tasks for his members, who are in their turn expected to go out and create new cells.

Although the HT looks back fourteen centuries for its inspiration of creating the Caliphate, it does not want to re-create a medieval state. Unlike the IMU, the HT recognizes the achievements of non-Muslim cultures and societies, and wishes to adapt them to its future Caliphate. The organization relies on modern technology to spread its message.

Arrests of HT cell members have revealed computer disks, videos, CDs, the latest printing and photocopying machines, and extensive use of email – all of which are very rare in Central Asia, where people have little access to technology. Much of the HT's equipment was funded and imported from abroad, indicating probable collusion with senior bureaucrats in the customs department. The HT's favorite form of propaganda is the *shabnama* (night letter), which is printed at night and pushed under people's doors like a newspaper.<sup>27</sup>

In Kazakhstan, where Islamic radicalism has so far not been widely spread, the HT started to gain popularity three-four years ago. In 2001, for the first time, Kazakhstani police reported to arrest of HT activists in the south of the country. On July 6, 2001 HT leaflets appeared in thousands of mailboxes in Almaty, shocking the security forces and the population. The day was chosen because it is the birthday of President Nazarbayev, who only a few weeks earlier urged the population of the country to resist Islamic radicalism:

Some people cherish the hope that the Muslim population of our states will support radicals, that the clergy will take us back to the Middle Ages, put the veil on women's faces and make men grow beards to the waist. This radicalism may start to advance triumphantly in an individual country like Tajikistan or Uzbekistan. But this will be just the beginning.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia," *Yale University Press, USA*, 2002, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> Reuters, "Neighbors Asked to Resist Radicalism," Almaty, June 19, 2001.

The HT's simplistic, one-dimensional ideology, imported from the Arab world, is gaining in popularity because in times of dire stress people grasp at simple straws. Although the HT's program offers no concrete solutions for Central Asia's complex problems, its overriding message is that the coming of the Caliphate and an Islamic system will resolve all problems and create an ideal society. The HT's ideology and the methods of achieving their goals are very close to those of the Bolsheviks party in Russia a hundred years ago, and it may be another reason why they have a success in Central Asia. For the desperate youth of Central Asia, the HT's single-minded, incorruptible activists, to whom in better times they might not have given a second thought, now appear to be saviors.

Across the region weak economies are nearing collapse and rule of strongmen has become entrenched. Many parts of the former Soviet Union are seized by a revolution of diminishing expectations. Armed militancy has grown, not as ideology but as a way to express disagreement when other means are unavailable, or have failed.<sup>29</sup>

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the activities of the HT within Central Asia have reportedly increased. This is mainly related to the dissemination of propaganda against the west and the countries within the region supporting Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. Despite the undoubted success of OEF in discriminating the IMU, a risk remains of the HT and the IMU cooperating with al Qaeda remnants and a dangerous radical Islamic terrorist threat emerging in the region. The fear that the HT will move from an educational to a militant jihad may well become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as happened in 1917 when the Bolsheviks led people in Russia to the revolution.

The other major Sunni Islamic sect that began to find a foothold in Central Asia was Wahhabism.

The strict Wahhabi creed has its roots in the eighteen century movement under Abdul Wahab of Saudi Arabia to eliminate Sufism among the Arab Bedouins... Although Wahhabis had first arrived in Central Asia in 1912, when a native of Medina, Sayed Shari Muhammed, set up Wahhabu cells in the Ferghana Valley, the austere creed – which opposed not only Sufism but warship at shrines – was never particularly popular, for its broke

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<sup>29</sup> Paula Newberg, "Central Asia and Democracy," *Los Angeles Times*, November 19, 2000.

with the moderate Islamic traditions of central Asia. But in the 1980s, as Saudi funds flowed to Wahhabi leaders of the Afghan Mujahedeen and later of Central Asia (many of whom trained in Saudi madrassahs), Wahhabism began to play an increasingly influential role in these regions.<sup>30</sup>

The problem of spreading religious extremism in Central Asia is directly connected with the lack of democracy. Better religious education and more open dialogue about Islamic values are crucial if moderate Islam is to overcome radical leanings. The rise of extremism often stems from ignorance about Islam, fostered by misguided teaching and money abroad, as well as the manipulation of religion by people such as Osama bin Laden.

Opposition forces in Central Asia, together with human-right activists, argue that the Islamic threat is being exaggerated to crush all forms of dissent, religious or otherwise. But even those who think that Islamic radicalism and terrorism are real dangers criticize the governments' heavy handed methods of controlling religion.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. Drug Traffic**

Another serious problem is drug trafficking and use. Drug addiction has grown in Kazakhstan with the introduction of cheap heroin from Afghanistan, where income of opium farmers and traffickers is about \$2.3 billion, a sum equivalent to half the legitimate GDP of the country. Opium now cultivated in 28 out of 32 Afghani provinces, and 7% of the population works in the opium trade.<sup>32</sup> For many Afghans living in rural areas, producing opium is the only way to survive.

Before the 2000 ban, prices had slumped to \$35 a kilo, or \$1,100 a hectare, an income close to that for legal groups; but since then prices have risen again, making poppies correspondingly more attractive. At the end of 2002, farmers could get \$540 a kilo, or over \$16,000 a hectare, which no other crop could rival.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia," *Yale University Press, USA*, 2002, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> The UN Office on Drugs and Crime Report:  
[http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2003.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan_opium_survey_2003.pdf), accessed August 2004.

<sup>33</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p.14.

Drug addiction problems are escalating as production within Afghanistan increases. In 2001 thirty seven thousand people in Kazakhstan were officially listed as drug users, although estimates placed the number of thousands more off the records. According to UNODC, about 120 tons of drugs in heroin equivalent are supplied to Europe through Central Asian countries. Some estimates indicate that up to 65% of Afghan heroin and opium is transported to Russia and Europe via the Central Asian region, because it is easier for smugglers to carry drugs through Central Asian republics and Russia, because their state boundaries are significantly more transparent and less protected. Another important factor is the use of one language (Russian) as a means of communication from the Afghan border on south to the Finnish and Norwegian boundaries in the north. From Tajikistan drugs, are delivered to Kyrgyzstan mainly via the Khorog-Osh highway, then further to Bishkek, where it is forwarded to Russia through Kazakhstan either by air or railway transports; part of the drugs stay in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Another interesting fact is the nature of the traffic itself is changing. Before being shipped out of Afghanistan opium is increasingly being processed in heroin, which has a much higher value and is easier to conceal and move around. Traffickers have also learnt to move it in smaller and more frequent shipments.

Heroin first appeared in Central Asia the early 1990s. Last year [2002], close to five tons were seized, and the amount actually getting through is probably 10-20 times bigger. The quality is getting better, too. In 2001 unhappy Russian customers returned some heroin to Afghanistan, but last year [2002] the buyers must have been content the value of heroin being trafficked through Central Asia at least trebled.<sup>34</sup>

Intravenous drug use, with addicts passing on infection by sharing contaminated needles, is cited as the main cause of the epidemic. UN report on AIDS, recently identified Eastern Europe and Asia as the areas with the fastest-growing HIV rates and

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<sup>34</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," The Economist, July 26, 2003, pp. 14-15.

blamed injecting drug users as a primary cause. The rise in drug use and needle sharing has fueled an AIDS-HIV crisis; it is now estimated that there are three hundred thousand Central Asians infected with HIV, of whom the largest number live in Kazakhstan.<sup>35</sup>

#### **4. Water Problem and Lack of Regional Cooperation**

Water problem is also an issue to be emphasized.

The Amu Darya and Syr Darya, the region's two main rivers, spring from the Pamir and Tian Shan mountains, cross several countries along their course, each well over 2,000 km (1,250 miles) long, and eventually flow into the Aral Sea, a huge lake. Water is essential for this arid region, not only for people but above all the agriculture: irrigation gulps up over 90% of the available water. The irrigation networks are old and inefficient, however, so half the water never reaches the fields. Farmers, used to getting their water free, over-water their crops, which brings salt to the surface. To aggravate matters, the dominant crop is cotton, which is particularly thirsty.<sup>36</sup>

So, there would be no shortage of water if it were properly managed. As rivers travel down the region and water gets diverted for irrigation, their flow gradually turns into a trickle. By the time they reach the Aral Sea, which straddles Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, there is no water left. The surface area of the Aral has shrunk to less than half its size in 1960, the volume of water has dropped by three-quarters, and salinity is four times what it used to be. This created ecological as well as economic devastation in the surrounding area.

Things are likely to get worse. Every Central Asian country except Kazakhstan is planning a big expansion in irrigated areas to feed growing populations, and will therefore need more water. And Afghanistan, which has recently been too busy with the war and its aftermath to claim 8% of the Amu Darya waters to which it is entitled, will start doing so once its agriculture gets going again.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP), [www.odccp.org](http://www.odccp.org), accessed August 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Wegerich, "Water: The Difficult Path to a Sustainable Future for Central Asia," *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, ed. by Tom Everett-Heath, London: Routledge Curzon, 2003, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 9.

Unable to make an integrated power market work, all the countries in the region now aim to generate enough power and retain enough water for their own needs, which makes no economic sense. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are thinking of building reservoirs to store water released by Kyrgyzstan in winter time to prevent flooding.

The government in Tajikistan would dearly love to build two new dams, connect the grids in the north and south of the country (which are separated by mountains) and even export power south of the border. Kyrgyzstan also has dreams about hydro power, giving the downstream countries nightmares. But neither country is likely to be able to find the money.<sup>38</sup>

All these attempts to solve the problem separately only increase the tensions between the states.

With so much to be gained working together, why are Central Asian republics so divided? This question is discussed more detailed in the next chapter of the thesis; however, the Soviet legacy has much to do with it. The Soviet regime was anxious to destroy the pan-Islamic and pan-Turkish ideology promoted by Central Asian intellectuals in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, so it could introduce bolshevism more easily. It therefore cut up a multi-ethnic empire into separate pieces to bring together supposedly “national” groups defined mainly by language. When the republics became independent in 1991-1992, the new states felt they had to exaggerate their differences to justify their continued existence.

Regional tensions have been further exacerbated by the different ways the various Central Asian countries have dealt with post-Soviet transition. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have adopted more radical market reforms than Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan is still trying to pick up the pieces after its disastrous war.

### **C. FIRST STEPS ON INTERNATIONAL ARENA**

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Kazakhstan happened to become the fourth nuclear power on Earth. This fact attracted attention of the West because Kazakhstan held 104 Soviet-era SS-19 ballistic missiles with more than a thousand warheads, along with testing sites at Baikonur and Semipalatinsk. After many discussions, Kazakhstan

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<sup>38</sup> “A Survey of Central Asia,” *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 6.

accepted the Non-Proliferation Treaty's terms and a liquidation of nuclear weapons in its territory in 1991. By doing so, the republic needed guarantees of its own security. Since the country had not been well known among the world nations by that time, yet; the only way to find “a Friends coalition of interested states” was development relations in the area of security within the CIS framework.

Kazakhstan is the only country in Central Asia that had a true nationalist movement before the Soviet period, but it is also, as it was mentioned earlier, the country that had undergone the highest degree of Russification. Kazakhstan is obsessed with the risk that its northern Russian-majority territories might secede. Solzhenitsyn's statement in 1990, that “...the future of Russia depended on a re-centring on the Slavic core”, and thus on a partition of Kazakhstan, created tremendous resentment in Kazakhstan. In order to avoid the risk of a split, President of Kazakhstan Nazarbayev resolved to stick with Russia.

In 1992, Kazakhstan, Russia, and several CIS countries signed a Collective Security Treaty. In addition, Kazakhstan and Russia concluded a bilateral agreement on joint defense. Simultaneously, Kazakhstan started developing relations in the military area with the United States, Turkey, China, Germany and France. All these nations established Defense Attaché offices at their embassies in Almaty, former capital city of Kazakhstan. In 1994-1995 Kazakhstan sent its first Defense Attaches to China, Russian Federation, Turkey and the United States of America. In 1994 Kazakhstan joined Partnership for Peace program in the frame of its cooperation with NATO. But, having the Soviet historical background, Kazakhstan hesitated to strengthen international relations with Western nations. The influence of Russia was still very strong.

From a strategic point of view, up until 1996 Moscow was able to maintain its presence in territorial and military terms. Since 1994, the Russians have tried to build into all co-operation agreement with the south a clause specifying agreements on frontiers guards and military integration. However, these requirements bear little relation to any real threat.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Oliver Roy, “The Creation of Nations,” *New York University Press*, 2000, p. 197.

The United States has tried to influence on the development of Kazakhstan's policy in the area of security since the republics independence, promising general economic aid and specifically to pay the cost of dismantling the missiles. Nazarbayev skillfully used the issue to build up a solid relationship with the United States and NATO countries and this way to extract the maximum financial benefit for Kazakhstan.

By the time the missiles were dismantled, in 1995, the country had received some \$400 million from Washington. But although Nazarbayev banned further nuclear tests, he continues to rent the Baikonur launch site to Russia.<sup>40</sup>

However, nuclear weapon possession was not the only factor motivating Western interest in Kazakhstan that time. The country had enormous energy reserves, which remained largely untapped during the Soviet era because Moscow preferred to expand oil production in Russian Siberia. With estimated reserves of 100 billion barrels of oil and 85 trillion cubic feet of gas along its Caspian Sea coastline, Kazakhstan became probably the largest unexplored oil-bearing region in the world.

Kazakhstan has had mixed success in exploiting its greatest advantage, however. Nazarbayev became the first Central Asian leader to conclude a deal with a foreign oil company when after four years of negotiations he signed a joint venture with U.S. Chevron Corporation in May 1992 to develop the Tengiz oil field and build pipeline from the field to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, Russia. But work did not start on the \$2.6 billion pipeline until 1997, and it was not until thirteen years after the negotiations began (March 2001) that the 948-mile pipeline was completed and began tests.<sup>41</sup>

The pipeline was officially opened at the end of 2001, and started pumping 560,000 barrels of oil a day to Novorossiysk.

After the Chevron deal was signed, international oil companies and embassies thronged to Almaty, at that point still the capital city. At the beginning of 1990s, Kazakhstan signed lucrative exploration and export deals with oil companies from the United States, China, Europe, India, Japan, and Turkey that annually brought in \$400-

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<sup>40</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia," *Yale University Press, USA*, 2002, p. 61.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

\$800 million in foreign investment. Western interest and investment in the oil sector decreased drastically in the mid-1990s because of low international oil prices and Russian objections to propose Western pipelines that would travel south and avoid Russian territory.

Oil production, which had been close to 526,000 barrels a day in 1991, when Kazakhstan was still part of the Soviet Union, rapidly declined over the decade, owing largely to Russian attempts to restrict Kazakh oil fields by not allowing Kazakh oil exports through the existing Russian pipeline network, which extended to Europe. Western investment in Kazakhstan did revive in May 2000, after a Western oil consortium discovered a new oil field in the East Kashagan area in the Caspian Sea, reputed to be one of the biggest in the world.<sup>42</sup>

Oil and gas are not the only strings to Kazakhstan's bow. The country has vast mineral resources (Eighty different minerals were mined during the Soviet time), and the steppe produces enormous quantities of wheat, all of which add to Kazakhstan's wealth and economic viability. These resources have induced international donor agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to lend Kazakhstan extensive funds to privatize industry and land – a process began on April 1994 with the sale of fifty large state-owned companies to the private sector.

#### **D. ARMED FORCES DEVELOPMENT AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE**

Many changes were made in the structures of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan during the first decade after independence. The years 1992 to 2000 saw four ministers of defense with each possessing his own views about military reform, but all these views were mainly based on the old Soviet Doctrine. It was also difficult to expect something revolutionary concerning the creation of the Armed Forces. Due to the economic problems, the state budget did not even define the certain percentage for the military needs until 1999. The Ministry of Defense received money to pay personnel salaries, and to maintain buildings, old Soviet weapons and equipment directly from the state budget. The only new equipment that could be ordered was that which could be obtained from the compensations by Russians for using military testing areas.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

During the 1990s, defense spending was a low priority, and this was only addressed in 2000, as a result of improved economic performance. The 2001 military budget was 25 billion Tenge (\$172 million), representing an increase of around 8 billion Tenge on the previous year.<sup>43</sup>

Since then, the military budget in Kazakhstan has been 0.9%, and thanks to the country's fast economic growth it doubled in 2004, compared to 2001. 0.9 percent is still a low figure and the lowest in the post-Soviet space, although, in dollars, it is the highest in Central Asia. However, it allowed to begin some structural changes in the security structures, and to make some plans for the re-equipment of the Armed Forces.

In a comparatively short period, some progress was made. A law on contract service has been passed, and one on alternative service is "under consideration." A legislative basis for further military reform has been drawn up for the period up to 2005, with provisions for various sub-programs. In 2000 a military doctrine was written and the organization of the Armed Forces in Kazakhstan was divided into four Military Districts: Southern, Western, Eastern and Central. Mobile Forces were formed, and "...the number of contract servicemen has increased to around 12,000. The Armed Forces are outfitted with S-75, S-200 and S-300 air defense missile systems, as well as Su-25, Su-27, and MiG-29 aircraft."<sup>44</sup>

In July 2001, Kazakhstan held its largest military exercise ever in three southern oblasts (regions), and with U.S. help, began to train commando units for counterinsurgency. Old Soviet equipment was rapidly overhauled, while the United States started supplying new communications and mountain warfare equipment.

These changes were a step forward, but nonetheless, all the new equipment Kazakhstan received, and even the creation of the Military Districts resulted from changes made under the influence of old Soviet military thinking.

The United States began to propose Security Assistance programs in 1994, starting with International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. At the same time, Turkey and Germany suggested training for Kazakhstani officers in their countries.

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<sup>43</sup> Roger N. McDermott, "The Crisis in the Kazakh Armed Forces," July 16, 2003, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> "Kazakhstan Launches Patriotic Drive to Improve Army Prestige," *Interfax-Kazakhstan*, May 2, 2002.

Kazakhstan started sending its military personnel to the Western states, but only in order to keep and develop good relations with those countries. The military people trained in the West had difficulties building their careers in the Kazakhstani Armed Forces, and many of them resigned.

Since 1997, Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and Excess Defense Articles programs have been opened for Kazakhstan to obtain U.S. military equipment, but because Kazakhstan did not rely very much on these programs and did not know how they worked, usually the U.S. Defense Attaches in Kazakhstan determined what kind of equipment to order for the country's Armed Forces. This, as a rule, did not reflect the actual needs of the state's military.

Big changes concerning security building in Kazakhstan occurred after the September 11 events. These events coincided with the reappointment of Mukhtar Altynbaev to the post of Minister of Defense in December 2001, "...after his resignation in 1999 over controversial arms sales to North Korea"<sup>45</sup>. The appointment of General Altynbaev gave new impetus to military reform and international military cooperation development. He admitted publicly to the existence of problems in the management structure of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces. The structure during the first decade of independence was denoted by the absence of an intermediary post between the Chief of the General Staff and district commanders. From the very beginning of his reappointment, Altynbaev started working on the further reforming of the military structures. Also, the Decree on the Reform of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan was signed by Nursultan Nazarbayev, the President of the Republic and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the Nation, on May 7, 2003. In accordance with the Decree, the following changes were legalized:

- The Committee of Chiefs of Staff was established whose functions were divided between the Ministry of Defense and the newly formed structure.
- Transition to a 3- branch structure of the Armed Forces was executed. In addition to the Air Defense Forces, which include the Air Force, Ground Forces and the Navy were to be formed. A Mobile Force was transformed to an Airmobile Force, and it was outlined as a separate branch of the Armed Forces.

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<sup>45</sup> V. Georgiev, "That Same Altynbaev: Kazakhstan's New Defense Minister Has Already Once Directed the Country's Armed Forces," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, December 20, 2001, p. 5.

- A decision was made on the conversion of military districts into regional commands (West, East, South, and Astana (the capital city)) for closer cooperation between the services.

These changes are evidence of a strong shift toward the West. The creation of the Committee of Chiefs of Staff and regional commands is the reflection of mutual work with the United States and NATO experts on the new structure of the Armed Forces. After this reform the Chairman of Committee for National Security, and the Minister of Internal Affairs became civilian positions. The next step will be the same change with the post of the Minister of Defense. It will strengthen civilian control over the military.

Russia, unlike the United States, did not support the creation of Kazakhstani Navy on the Caspian Sea. Thus, since this decision has now been made, Kazakhstan is seeking U.S. assistance in this endeavor. The same is true with the Airmobile force. It is an absolutely new creation that does not fit the old Soviet doctrine. The new force requires new equipment, and Kazakhstan started working with the United States to obtain new equipment for the Kazakhstani Airmobile force, using FMF funds. A detailed analysis of these issues will be done in the second chapter of the thesis.

The process of the Armed Forces professionalization is very closely connected with forming a united system of military education, which will exclude duplication. Radical steps in the direction of restructuring the national system of military training were made in 2003. Military educational institutions have been re-organized and made subordinate to corresponding main staff according to the troops they are related.

At present Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense is working on training professional sergeants and improving the system of recruiting soldiers on a contract basis. It is planned to increase the proportion of contract servicemen to 60 per cent of the listed strength by the end of 2004, and to 85 per cent in 2005.<sup>46</sup>

The training of contract servicemen will be organized at so-called military-technical schools and military departments of civilian universities which have the corresponding teaching facilities.

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<sup>46</sup> Author's Interviews of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense Officials, September 2004, Almaty and Astana.

It is natural that the military reforms success will mostly depend on the officer corps and its high morale. In this respect the Ministry of Defence does a purposeful work. Taking into consideration the advanced experience of other states, first of all NATO members, it has developed and introduced a system of computer testing, which is unique in the CIS, and developed a system of criteria for selection of officers, which helps to make an all-round and objective assessment of candidates for highest commanding posts. The officer corps must satisfy the following requirements: general erudition, high professional qualities, broad reasoning, capability to organize work of subordinates, determined and correct management both of training and service. Each year more and more officers are sent for different courses to NATO countries.

However, the task of placing elements of Kazakhstan's military as possible participants in NATO operations requires a much larger number of officers speaking foreign languages. In this respect, the decision of the creation of a Military Institute (University) of Foreign Languages is essential. With the creation of this educational institution, which will train commissioned officers, NCOs and cadets, "Kazakhstan's domestic capability to produce effectively trained officers with military English will be greatly improved."<sup>47</sup> The doors to this Institute will be open for all Kazakhstan's neighbors, which shows Kazakhstan's will to strengthen cooperation with countries in the region.

Nevertheless, the success of this new structure, as well as the success of the entire military reform in Kazakhstan, will depend very much on the support of Kazakhstan's partners in the West.

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<sup>47</sup> Roger McDermott, "Kazakhstan's Military Reform Creeps Forward," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 1 Issue 71 (August 11, 2004).

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### **III. IMPACT OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ON KAZAKHSTAN'S SECURITY POLICY**

#### **A. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND KAZAKHSTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY**

A new state's development of security depends very much on the influence of other countries. The geographical location of Kazakhstan, sandwiched between the two largest countries in the world the Russian Federation and the Chinese People's Republic, determined the complexity of Kazakhstan's security policy. After the events of 11 September, the United States started paying more attention not only to the Western part of the country, where the main energy resources are located, but also to the Southern area, where the threat of religious extremism, drug and weapon proliferation led by terrorists groups and organizations became a disturbing factor for the U.S. national security. Russia, China, and the United States are the nations whose aid has had the most impact on building security structures in Kazakhstan after the independence. Occasionally, the interests of the three powers in Kazakhstan coincide, but more often than not, they conflict.

Russian influence on Kazakhstan's development can be considered historically traditional. The Russians always sought to maintain trade with the East. This interest was part of what prompted Ivan IV's southeast expansion in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Russia founded several towns that bordered the territory where Kazakhs lived, but at that time,

the Russians had only a minimal interest in the Kazakh Steppe to the south and were more interested in expanding east, toward the Pacific Ocean. For their part, the Kazakhs now came to see the Russians as a possible source of assistance.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a limited contact between the Russians and Kazakhs occurred. The Russians were significantly expanding their presence in the Urals, in the European part of modern Kazakhstan, but at that time this land was not considered part of Kazakh territory. The economic development led Russia to expand its territory. The

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<sup>48</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "The Kazakh," *Hoover Institution Press*, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1995, p. 29.

economy expansion led Russia to expand its territory further to the south during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, the actual Russian conquest started in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since that time, Kazakhstan has always been dependent on Russia. During these centuries, the Russians and Kazakhs created an economic, cultural and even ethnic unity.

Therefore, historically

...as the northernmost of these people [Russians], the Kazakhs have always been a frontier population living on the boundaries of more powerful states. This has made them more susceptible to conquest but may also have insured their survival. Their conquerors often sought to pacify them in an attempt to create secure borders.<sup>49</sup>

In other words, both Kazakhstan and Russia were interested in building a joint security system. The length of the border between the two countries, which is one of the longest land border in the world (6,450 kilometers, or almost 4.500 miles), is another factor influencing Kazakhstan's dependence on Russia, as well as Russian interests in Kazakhstan.

In any state,

the military view toward national policy reflects the professional responsibility for military security of the state. The responsibility leads the military: (1) to view the state as the basic unit of political organization; (2) to stress the continuing nature of the threats to the military security of the state and the continuing likelihood of war; (3) to emphasize the magnitude and immediacy of the security threats; (4) to favor the maintenance of strong, diverse, and ready military forces; (5) to oppose the extension of state commitments and the involvement of the state in war except when victory is certain.<sup>50</sup>

These factors determined national military policy in Kazakhstan and changes in its military structure during the first decade following independence.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited Soviet weapons (including nuclear), equipment, and doctrine. All the commissioned officers who

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<sup>49</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "The Kazakh," *Hoover Institution Press*, Preface, p. XX.

<sup>50</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "The Soldier and the State," *The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press*, Cambridge, London, England, pp. 64-65.

remained in Kazakhstani army had received their education in the Soviet Union. When Kazakhstan decided to eliminate all the nuclear weapons the country possessed, it needed some security guarantees, and at that time, taking into account all aforementioned factors, Russia seemed to be the best ally. Moreover, Kazakhstan's declining economy depended on Russia very much, and until the end of the 1994, Kazakhstan was in a so-called ruble zone, and used Russian rubles as the national currency.

The most difficult years for the young newly independent republic were between 1991 and 1996, and the country needed assistance in order to develop its own Armed Forces, but the only substantial assistance Kazakhstan received was assistance from Russia. It was not exactly an assistance: Russia provided education for Kazakhstani military, weapons and equipment, as well as maintenance, compensating it for the use of testing ranges and the space center 'Baikonur' in Kazakhstan. However, this cooperation determined Kazakhstan's internal security policy during this time. The U.S. Nan-Lugar Amendment provided some funds for Kazakhstan, but these were completely dedicated to nuclear weapon elimination.

The most difficult years from an economic point of view were 1995 and 1996. The establishment of its own currency, the Tenge, created large-scale inflation, and the transition to a market economy freed prices. The years 1998-1999 could be categorized as the years of stabilization. During these years, the views on foreign policy, security and military development began to change.

In 2002, during the meeting between Kazakhstan's Minister of Defense Altynbaev and the U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld during the visit of the latter to Kazakhstan, the decision was made to create a bilateral Kazakhstani – U.S. defense consultations commission. The commission defined the main mutual goals and spheres of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United States in the area of defense, which are the following:

- Establishment of a professional Kazakhstan Army with a rapid deployment capability, which is compatible with standards and trained according to the standard of NATO forces;
- Development of military infrastructure and capabilities in the Caspian Sea Region; and,

- Pursuing general systemic reforms in the Kazakhstan Armed Forces to support achievement of these overall goals.<sup>51</sup>

Continuing to work together in implementing these general goals, both sides developed a five-year plan of cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the United States Department of Defense. The Plan was signed on September 12, 2003 in the United States during the last meeting of the bilateral defense consultations commission. The plan fully supports the aforementioned goals.

In the area of developing a professional Army in Kazakhstan both sides agreed upon the following:

- Equip and train a battalion size force capable of participating in an international peacekeeping operation (Kazbat). The objective is a NATO-quality, interoperable peacekeeping unit capable of deploying and sustaining itself in support of a peacekeeping operation.
- Increase the military capabilities of Kazakhstan's Air Mobile Force Mountain Battalion. The objective is to enhance the Battalion's capability to secure Kazakhstan's southern border and southern region against activities by narcotics smugglers, terrorists, or organized crime networks that could infiltrate from the south by ensuring it is equipped commensurate with combat requirements and NATO interoperability standards.
- Enhance the capabilities of Kazakhstani Air and Air Defense Force's transport aviation (C-130), with respect to internal and international military airlift, so that it may deploy a sufficient number of troops within the borders of Kazakhstan within specific time periods and with staff and pilots qualified to plan and conduct international air transport operations.
- Establish a professional Military Language Training Institute to provide comprehensive language training, to include English for Kazakhstani officers and to train linguists to support MOD requirements for bilateral and multi-lateral engagement activities. An ancillary benefit will be to prepare officers and NCOs for military training in foreign countries. It is planned to turn the Institute into a regional one.

To provide security in the Caspian region, both sides will:

- Establish a NATO-interoperable, rapid reaction unit capable of responding to terrorist or other types of attack either on or off shore. Organize training of special units based at a Counter Terrorism Training Center in cooperation with various states.

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<sup>51</sup> Records from the Meeting of the U.S.-Kazakhstani Bilateral Consultation Commission, April 18, 2002.

- Develop military capabilities in the Caspian Sea Region capable of defending Kazakhstan's national interests including a rapid response force for the protection of oil pipelines and other sensitive infrastructures.
- Establish a helicopter unit capable of supporting multiple military tasks in the Caspian Region (Huey-2).
- Develop a maritime force capable of defending Kazakhstan's interests in the Caspian Sea, to include patrolling and monitoring Kazakhstani and foreign vessels transiting Kazakhstani waters.
- Develop a Naval Academy in Aktau. Ensure the Program of Instruction is flexible enough so that the Academy can evolve into a training center to support other forms of water-related training, such as SCUBA for special operations, counter terrorist and counter narcotics operations, and search and rescue.
- Establish a multi-agency regional center in the Caspian Sea Region, which emphasizes training in counter terrorism, maritime control, law enforcement, search and rescue, and disaster response.

The United States will assist Kazakhstan in the following areas by supporting military reform:

- Support development of a Professional NCO Corps by creating a training system that will enhance the education of NCOs, assimilate new doctrine and concepts of Officer-NCO relations, and support an NCO academy with the doctrine, equipment and cadre training necessary to achieve an NCO training system capable of graduating the required quantity of NCOs annually to meet the needs of the Armed Forces.
- Reform the Officer/NCO Personnel Management System so that it evolves into a professional, centrally-managed system capable of recruiting, training, and assigning officers based on the needs of the Armed Forces.
- Reform all aspects of the vehicle and equipment maintenance system so that it becomes capable of sustained maintenance of new equipment acquisitions, first of all, western samples.
- Establish and train Military Police units capable of maintaining law and order in the Kazakhstan Armed Forces, as well as providing the necessary Military Police support to peacekeeping operations.
- Improve the capabilities of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces in dealing with the Press (Public Affairs).<sup>52</sup>

The Plan was a breakthrough for the entire military concept. It also portrays the U.S. commitment to further assistance for Kazakhstan's Armed Forces and the desire to

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<sup>52</sup> Plan Of Cooperation between Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan and United States Department of Defense for 2003-2008, September 12, 2003, Washington D.C.

build a long-term military cooperative relationship with Kazakhstan. In addition, the plan stresses U.S. interests in building strong security in the Caspian Sea for protection of oil pipelines and fields.

In the area of energy, the United States is also interested in working with Kazakhstan and international oil firms on the development of the legal framework required to provide access for oil producers in Kazakhstan to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. This effort will extend the reach of the U.S. multiple Caspian pipeline strategy to Central Asia. The U.S. objective in supporting this network is to afford the Caspian states reliable, commercially attractive, and environmentally sound alternatives to a previous pipeline system that exclusively transited Russia. By so doing, the United States can help enhance global energy security, bolster the independence of Caspian energy producing countries, and deepen the integration of countries along these pipeline routes into the global economy. The United States understands that these projects require strong security in the Caspian Sea. For this reason, it is very important that Kazakhstan has strong naval forces there. Likewise, building a strong Navy requires Western, and, first of all, U.S. support and assistance. The author believes that the United States and Western companies need security in the area of Kazakhstan's oil fields no less than does Kazakhstan.

Thus, by conducting military reform, Minister Altynbaev wishes to procure western hardware, but given the restrictions imposed by the current defense budget, it is now clearly hard to reach. Therefore, he pays much attention to the development of international relations with NATO nations, even though understanding the importance of maintaining balanced relations with Kazakhstan's great neighbors: China and Russia.

China's strategic interests in Kazakhstan are extremely clear and explicit. First, curb the "East Turkistan" (Dong Tu – the abbreviation for "Dong Tujuesidan" [East Turkistan]) separatist forces, and second, maintain a stable rear region for China on Kazakhstan's borders, and third, turn Kazakhstan into one of the channels of diversification for the importation of energy sources, and a candidate for economic cooperation.

The first two interests shaped the first decade after Kazakhstan's independence as a decade of solving border issues between the two states. It was to the benefit of both sides to end the tensions on the 1,460 kilometer border, which is almost 1,000 miles, and settle one another's territorial disputes inherited from Tsarist times, which continued to plague relations between China and Kazakhstan. "Starting in the mid-1990s China set up joint border commissions with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan that over the years have resolved most of the hundreds of borders disputes."<sup>53</sup> Solving the border problems, Kazakhstan and China established the basis for developing bilateral relations between the two countries.

In February 1995, the Chinese government signed a declaration that provided security guarantees to Kazakhstan. It was the same year when Kazakhstan opened a Defense Attaché office in its Embassy in Beijing. Since that time, contacts between the military institutions of the countries became more intensive, but actually, their activity increased in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Now, the Ministers of Defense of both nations meet at least once a year. In the past two years, they organized the so-called meeting "with no ties", emphasizing that both sides value not only formal meetings, but also establishing good personal relations. The Chinese Ministry of Defense sponsors the program for families of senior Kazakhstani officers spending their vacations with their counterparts in China, which is usually at the level of MOD department heads. China is the only country with which Kazakhstan possesses these kinds of semi-formal programs.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China started increasing its assistance to the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan. The amount of the assistance is not much smaller than the security assistance provided to Kazakhstan by the U.S. government. It is to be stressed that the level of bureaucracy, as far as the aid is concerned, is much lower in China. It takes no more than six months after signing a bilateral agreement until the actual delivery of the equipment. For example, in 2003, the agreement was signed on delivery of 40 jeeps "Cherokee" to the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan, and in August 2003, the vehicles were in Kazakhstan. The delivery of U.S. aid can take years.

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<sup>53</sup> Bates Gill, "From Concerns to Confidence: China's Evolving Regional Security Strategy," George Washington University, December 5-6, 2003.

The growing cooperation between Kazakhstan and China is reflected in the recently signed documents. The “Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Kazakhstan” was signed on 23 December 2002. The Treaty has both historic and practical significance and set the basic direction for the long-term development of bilateral relations between the two countries. The “Outline for Cooperation between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Kazakhstan from 2003 and 2008”, signed on 03 June 2003, outlined a plan for the specific path which bilateral cooperation would take in various areas.

The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, made a state visit to China at the invitation of President Hu Jintao from 16 to 19 May 2004. In the Joint declaration, signed on 17 May 2004, the Presidents stated that

- The two sides will continue interaction and exchange visits between the Ministries of National Defense of the two countries in accordance with agreements signed and accords reached previously, and will develop cooperation on military technology.
- Both sides recognize that terrorism, separatism and extremism are serious threats to the security and stability of the entire world. Within the framework of their bilateral agreements, the two sides will continue to strike effectively in all its forms, and at United Nations-designated terrorists and terrorist organization, to include the “East Turkistan Islamic Movement”.
- The Chinese side supports investment in western China by Kazakhstan enterprises. The Kazakh side supports the participation of Chinese enterprises in various economic construction projects in Kazakhstan.<sup>54</sup>

The statement entails 21 paragraphs, seven out of 21 touch on the security issues, seven are about economic projects, and the remaining seven concern general issues. This fact emphasizes concerns of both sides on security including economic growth. During the past two years, it is possible to observe a boom in economic developments between the two countries. All major economic projects require stability in the region. “Both sides recognize that their geographical proximity and highly complementary economies are prerequisites for close cooperation between the two countries in oil and natural gas.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Xinhua (New China News Agency), “Text of China-Kazakhstan Joint Declaration, Signed in Beijing by Chinese President Hu Jintao and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev,” May 17, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

The presidents agreed upon the development of such projects. These include building the Atasu to Alatau Pass Oil Pipeline as soon as possible, joint exploration and development of oil and gas on the continental shelf of the Caspian Sea, laying of a natural gas pipeline from Kazakhstan to China, building a trans-Kazakhstan rail trunk line from Dostyk Station (Almaty) to the Port of Aktau (on the Caspian Sea), and the development of the northern part of the Pan-Asian Railroad. One of the main problems for Kazakhstan is that the country is landlocked. All the aforementioned projects are very significant for Kazakhstan since they open the country's economy to the East. Figure 1<sup>56</sup> reflects a drastic growth in the trade between China and Kazakhstan in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

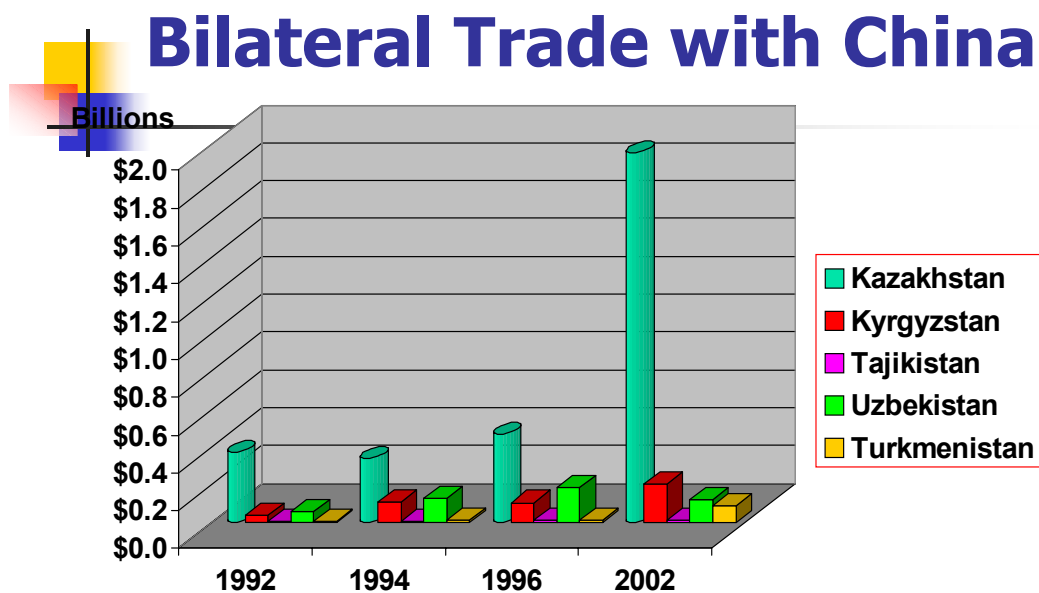


Figure 1. Bilateral Trade with China.

Chinese aid provided to the Kazakhstani military, and Chinese policy and diplomacy toward Kazakhstan has not greatly influenced the internal security reforms or

<sup>56</sup> Ren Dongfeng, "The Central Asia Policies of China, Russia and the USA, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Process, A View from China," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), October 1, 2003.

security policy in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, the intensive growth of the economic relations between the two countries has forced them to pay more attention to the instabilities in the region. Also, the regional security developments, discussed later, are the factors that may strongly impact internal security changes in Kazakhstan.

Thus, these last changes in military structures and views on security policy demonstrate Kazakhstan's shift to the West. However, the role of Russia in building security in Kazakhstan remains very strong. The influence of China on Kazakhstan's internal security policy is unlikely to be strong, but its economic influence should be a factor considered by Western politicians.

## **B. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND KAZAKHSTAN'S REGIONAL SECURITY POLICY**

Central Asia is strategically placed at the crossroad between Europe and China, Russia and Iran. Throughout its history, this has been a both blessing and a curse. Trade between West and East moved through Central Asia along the famed Silk Road, bringing development and prosperity. However, the region was also repeatedly invaded by powerful conquerors with imperial ambitions, from the Scythes and Mongols to Russians.

From an historical point of view, Central Asia is a very new phenomenon. As an independent geopolitical area, the region emerged after the end of the Cold War. Soviet Central Asia consisted of Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Even though Kazakhstan culturally, historically and from a language point of view, was very close to the aforementioned Soviet Republics, it was not considered part of Central Asia possibly because part of Kazakhstan's territory is geographically located in Europe.

In the post-Soviet era, Central Asia embodied all five newly independent states. However, notice that after 9/11, many sources often include Afghanistan in Central Asia. For instance, Stephen Blank, writing about a growing significance of the region in a revolutionary manner, stated: "The catalytic event that galvanized this revolution is not the attacks on America of September 11, 2001, though the planning for those attacks originated in Central Asia."<sup>57</sup> There is no doubt that geographically, culturally, ethnically, and, consequently, linguistically, Afghanistan is closer to Central Asian republics than to any other countries. It can also be argued that the Xingjian Province in

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<sup>57</sup> Stephen Blank, "Central Asia's Strategic Revolution," Asia Times Online, August 24, 2003.

Western China is a part of Central Asia for the same reasons: its stability is critical to the region, as in the case of Afghanistan, and it also has very strong cultural links to the post-Soviet Central Asian republics. However, since the U.S. State Department thinks Central Asia consists of the five post-Soviet states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, in discussing the influence of foreign assistance on Kazakhstan's regional security policy, this thesis will consider Central Asia as consisting of the same five countries.

The important geopolitical location of Central Asia after 1991 brought a competitive struggle between Russia, China, Iran, Turkey, India, Pakistan, and the United States to gain influence in the region. After 11 September 2001,

for the first time in history naval and air based power has successfully been brought to bear in lasting fashion against Central Asian forces and targets. And the demonstration of America's capability to project military power into Central Asia through joint and combined action with allies prefigured what we are now seeing in Iraq. What makes this important is that it represents a quantum leap in the external and internal military capabilities... of the great power and regional rivalries known as the new great game. Moreover, this demonstration of America's power projection capabilities has also contributed to a counter trend intended to deny us or other powers access to Central Asia and adjoining theaters.<sup>58</sup>

Although all five Central Asian states share a common history and culture, there are many differences among them. Historically, region is split between the nomads from the steppes and mountains, mainly Kyrgyzs, Kazakhs and Turkmens, and the sedentary, mainly urban Uzbeks and Tajiks who settled in the river of Transoxiana. The split was responsible for distinct cultural, religious and political identities that survive to this day.

The cultural split, however, ignores borders. Today's Central Asian states were Soviet creations which, before 1991, had no history as separate, independent countries. After decades of Soviet rule and careful manipulation of language and history, they suddenly found themselves independent but without anything much to hold saddled with large ethnic minorities.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Since independence, the individual Central Asian states have made different political and economic choices, which have meant that the contrasts between them are now quite striking.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have embraced more ambitious economic and political reforms than the rest of the region. Kazakhstan, with its large Russian minority and more developed economy, feels far more European than its neighbors.

Although all the countries seem stable for now, the calm is deceptive. Worrying signs of increased authoritarianism and political repression are everywhere. Regional divisions come at a high political and economic cost. Poverty remains pervasive, fueling social discontent. And drugs from Afghanistan threaten to damage the region's fragile social fabric and undermine the state. But to the outside world, the question of most immediate concern is probably whether Islamic radicalism is likely to revive.<sup>59</sup>

The threat of terrorism from Islamic extremism is a powerful argument for Russia, America and China to maintain an interest in the region. The continuing instability in Afghanistan remains an important risk factor for Central Asia. However, the spectrum of Talibanisation of the whole region probably never had much substance. Central Asian politics are shaped more by tribal and ethnic allegiances than by ideology, so Islamic movements in the region are likely to remain fragmented.

However, the ground for religious extremism is fertile. Poverty, lack of political freedom, ignorance about Islam that is exploited by ruthless outsiders, and money from drug trade make up an explosive cocktail. Most of the region's economies have still not fully recovered from the collapse of the Soviet system. The gap between rich and poor is widening. All these problems require joint efforts of the regional states and the assistance of the mentioned above great powers.

Before discussing foreign influence on cooperation between the Central Asian states, it is necessary to return to historical topics in order to consider the evolution of Kazakhstan's views on regional security.

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<sup>59</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 4.

The Russian constraint explains “Kazakhstan’s key role in the setting-up of the CIS (the Almaty Declaration of 20-21 December 1991); the signing of integration agreement with Russia in the area of customs, armed forces and frontier guards; the recognition of Russian as the language of official communication; the rejection of nuclear weapons (which have been either destroyed or returned to Moscow); the lease of the Baikonur base to Russia etc.”<sup>60</sup>

As it was mentioned earlier, in May 1992, a joint CIS defense organization was created when the Treaty of Collective Security was signed in Tashkent. “The Treaty was mainly concerned with external threats, but signatories also committed themselves to refrain from the use of force against one another.”<sup>61</sup> However,

the Tashkent Treaty did not have the desired effect and military integration did not follow. No joint CIS forces were ever created and no common military policy was agreed upon. Councils for coordinating policy on military and security affairs were created but no legal basis for the use of force in the event of an emergency was elaborated.<sup>62</sup>

The intervention by so-called peacekeeping troops in the Tajik civil war in 1993 made peacekeeping a central issue for functional cooperation between Russia and the Central Asian states (except Turkmenistan). Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan agreed to provide troops as part of the peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan. In June 1997, the civil war in Tajikistan ended when the conflicting parties signed the peace agreement. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan withdrew their peacekeeping units from Tajikistan in 1998, which changed the character of the so-called CIS collective peacekeeping troops, and in June 2000, the CIS mandate in Tajikistan formally ended.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Central Asian states fell into different categories depending on the degree and scope of their cooperation with Russia in the field of security. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were outside the CIS Treaty on Collective Security. Tajikistan, the weakest link in Central Asia, became the main ally of Russia in

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<sup>60</sup> Roy, Oliver, “The New Central Asia,” New York University Press, Washington Square, New York, 2000, pp. 191-192.

<sup>61</sup> Allison Roy and Lena Johnson, “Central Asian Security: The New International Context,” Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001, p. 104.

<sup>62</sup> Dubnov, Arkady, “Best Wishes for CIS Security,” in Former Soviet Union 15 Nations: Policy and Security, January 1999, p. 31.

Central Asia, and this indicates the weakness of Russia's position in the region. Whether the dynamics from within the region allow Russian engagement and influence in Central Asia to increase in the long-term still remains to be seen.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan still remained in the Treaty. In March 2000, the President of Kazakhstan signed an accord with Russia and Kyrgyzstan to organize a joint air defense system to advance the development of a joint air defense system for the CIS. Since that moment, "Air Defense units of Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been operating jointly".<sup>63</sup>

Reducing the role of Russia in Central Asia pushed the countries of the region to improve their own abilities in providing regional security. "Bilateral treaties and coordination efforts between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan dating back to 1992 were enlarged in the formation of a trilateral grouping including Kyrgyzstan in February 1994, which resolved to address, among other matters, water management, combating drug trafficking, and military cooperation."<sup>64</sup> The three states formally created a Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC). Tajikistan joined the CAEC in 1998 while Turkey and Georgia were granted observers status in 1999.

In December 1995, the CAEC resolved to form a joint Council of Defense Ministers, tasked with the consideration of regional security and defense coordination, including the coordination of military exercises, air defense and defense supplies, and a decision was made to create the tripartite peacekeeping battalion, Centrasbat. This initiative was supported by the United States, which sponsored the military exercise Centrasbat-1997 that was very successful. As Centrasbat's states, military units from Russia, the United States, Turkey and Georgia participated in this exercise. However, only small units from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan participated in the Centrasbat-2000 exercise, hosted by Kazakhstan. After this exercise, Centrasbat ended its existence. The reason for such a failure is the tensions between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for the leading position in the region. U.S. assistance in support of Centrasbat accelerated the

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Defense Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Vadim Soloviev and Sergey Sokut, "The Safety of the Commonwealth is Our Common Cause," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 42 (November 6-12, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Allison Roy, "Policy Cooperation in Central Asia" in Allison Roy and Lena Johnson, "Central Asian Security: The New International Context," Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001, p. 220.

process of the battalion's collapse since each of the countries believed that the other received more U.S. assistance and support to which it was entitled. For instance, one of the main reasons for Uzbekistan not wanting to continue its participation in Centrasbat was because the battalion's headquarter was located in the town of Zhibek Zholy, on the territory of Kazakhstan, and the United States provided much support to build the infrastructure there.

The difficulty in agreeing on effective security cooperation among the four CAEC states encouraged Kazakhstan to promote broader structures for regional cooperation, which encompass the CAEC states and a variety of other countries. Since March 1994, President Nazarbayev has promoted the concept of a Eurasian Union. This project includes a section on defense, which "...envisages joint measures to strengthen the Armed Forces of Union states and the creation of a common defense space to coordinate defense activities."<sup>65</sup> The union would include Russia.

President Nazarbayev has had greater success in initiating an even broader forum for regional cooperation, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), modeled on the OSCE. The CICA was first proposed by Nazarbayev at the United Nations in 1992, and subsequently has held periodic summit meetings.

CICA has issued several key documents including a Declaration of Principles, Declaration of Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilization, and the Almaty Act. Member-states seek to enlarge cooperation, and create and strengthen the atmosphere of peace, confidence, and friendship on the Asian continent in order to promote regional security.<sup>66</sup>

Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, India, Israel, Iran, Kyrgyz, Mongolia, Pakistan, the "State of Palestine," Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan are CICA Member States. Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Ukraine, and the United States are CICA Observer States. International organizations such as the United Nations and the OSCE have also been involved in an observer capacity.

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<sup>65</sup> "Foreign Policy Pursued by Kazakhstan," <http://www.president.kz/main/>, accessed March 2004.

<sup>66</sup> "Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia" at <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/22786.htm>, accessed December 2003.

The dialogue to create a Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (CANWFZ) presents another form of regional cooperation. The idea was first proposed at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General assembly in 1993 and promoted further at the Lisbon summit of OSCE in 1996. However, the debate on the issue only began seriously with the February 1997 Almaty Declaration of the five regional heads of state.

This zone would comprise all five CIS Central Asian states, despite Turkmenistan's reluctance to engage in other regional cooperation agreements. It would involve commitments by these five states, as well as some sort of security assurances by the nuclear-weapon states, especially neighboring Russia and China.<sup>67</sup>

The latter states have been involved in the discussion process in a more informal manner. Meetings in 1999 and 2000 of the 'Shanghai Five' group, which includes Russia and China and three Central Asia countries, states

...specifically have backed efforts by the Central Asian countries to set up a nuclear weapon-free zone. On September 27, 2002, five Central Asian countries completed negotiations on the text of a treaty to establish a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone.<sup>68</sup>

The aforementioned 'Shanghai Five' group, known informally until it was renamed the Shanghai Forum in July 2000,

originally arose out of real functional need to address unresolved traditional security issues in the Chinese border regions ... Its focus has shifted to address common concerns about separatism, terrorism, drugs trafficking and so forth, which are taken very seriously by the Chinese out of concern about growing instability in Xinjiang and its neighborhood.<sup>69</sup>

The SCO summit in July 2000 was attended by the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov. The participant accepted a Kyrgyz proposal to form, within the Shanghai Forum framework, a regional anti-terrorist center. President Karimov expressed a wish at this summit for Uzbekistan either to join the group or to establish cooperation with it on a

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<sup>67</sup> Allison Roy, "Policy Cooperation in Central Asia" in Allison Roy and Lena Johnson, "Central Asian Security: The New International Context," Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001, p. 224.

<sup>68</sup> Christine Kucia, Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) At a Glance, July 2003 at <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/nwfz.asp>, accessed January 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Allison Roy, "Policy Cooperation in Central Asia" in Allison Roy and Lena Johnson, "Central Asian Security: The New International Context," Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001, p. 235.

permanent basis. Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes during his visit to Kazakhstan in early November 2003 also mentioned that India had already announced its willingness to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This option raised the standing of the Forum and Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yerlan Idrisov (now Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the United Kingdom) declared that it was becoming a "...serious integrational regional union."<sup>70</sup>

At a meeting of Defense Ministers in Astana in March 2000, the new capital city of Kazakhstan since 1997, the five declared that they would "resolutely oppose any activities directed against other countries' carried out within their own territory by the forces of national ethnic separatism, religious extremism and terrorism."<sup>71</sup>

These goals offer a basis for broader cooperation, some of which could be intended, at least in the eyes of Russia and China, to supplant the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) activities in Central Asia. At the Astana meeting, the ministers determined that they would study how to "exchange experience in peacekeeping and cooperate in peacekeeping action." At the same time, they warned that their intention of maintaining long-term peaceful cooperation in Central Asia "...should not be undermined by the intervention of forces outside the region" and that for this purpose, they would "...strengthen consultations and cooperation between their defense departments."<sup>72</sup>

Despite the long distance that separates the Central Asian states from the United States, the latter has vital strategic interests there. Since 11 September 2001, the United States has focused on Central Asia in prosecuting the War on Terror and eliminating the influence of terrorist groups, as well as other destabilizing groups. Continuing air access to Afghanistan through Central Asia is an important interest so long as war there continues. Three of the five Central Asian states border Afghanistan, and all five worried about their southern neighbor and "trying to fight their own brand of terrorism, were eager to help sort out the Afghan mess. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan gave permission for American military bases on their soil. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan allowed American

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<sup>70</sup> Interfax Kazakhstan (Almaty), April 1, 2000, in SU/3805 G/3, April 3, 2000.

<sup>71</sup> Joint Communiqué of Defense Ministers of the Shanghai Five Countries, Xinhua (Beijing), March 30, 2000, in SU/3805 B/12-14, April 3, 2000.

planes to fly over their territory. Only Turkmenistan maintained a studied neutrality. All Central Asian countries also played a key role in delivering humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Overnight, a region that had disappeared from western radar screens found itself in the thick of the battle against terrorism.”<sup>73</sup>

In August 2003, Kazakhstan dispatched an engineering platoon to Iraq, where it is engaged in de-mining and water purification projects.

Decision to send peacekeepers to Iraq, enabling their participation in the post-war reconstruction of the country, was indeed a bold step: for the first time in the short history of the former Soviet Republic, a peacekeeping unit was being deployed beyond the region in support of on-going stabilization and humanitarian operations. Kazakhstan was the first in the region to do so.<sup>74</sup>

Analyzing the complex nexus between organized crime, drug trafficking and various violent militant groups, from al-Qaeda to the Islamic Party of Turkistan (IPT--the new name of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)) and disaffected members of avowedly peaceful groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), demands the vigilance and professionalism of the intelligence services.<sup>75</sup>

The key to combating these groups effectively is rooted in successful intelligence, an area to which the United States should pay more attention and which is becoming more vulnerable because of the Russian border troops withdrawal from Tajikistan. The withdrawal of Russian border guards from the Tajik-Afghan border, which started in May, may become another burden for the United States. The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention estimates that Afghanistan produced 3,600 tons of opium in 2003, six percent more than the previous year.

Russian and Tajik frontier guards seized almost six tons of heroin, the processed product, last year, and a smaller amount of raw opium, indicating the continued trend towards a rise in trafficking and a focus on

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<sup>72</sup> Joint Communiqué of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Five Countries, ITAR-TASS (Moscow), July 4, 2000, in SU/3805 G/1, July 6, 2000.

<sup>73</sup> “A Survey of Central Asia,” *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Roger N. McDermott and Igor Mukhamedov, “Kazakhstan’s Peacekeeping Support in Iraq,” *Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst*, January 28, 2004.

<sup>75</sup> Roger N. McDermott, “Kazakhstan’s Emerging Role in the War on Terror,” *Jamestown Terrorism Monitor*, Volume II, Issue 10, May 20, 2004.

smuggling the higher-value processed product. Some experts believe seizures represent only about a tenth of the amount successfully trafficked.<sup>76</sup>

Another problem also connected with the lack of professionalism of intelligence, which hurts global security, is weak control over the proliferation of weapons, weapons technology and expertise in Central Asia. Therefore, the United States helps all the countries in the region with security assistance. For example, programs which complement counter-terrorism assistance include continuing the demilitarization of the former chemical weapons facility in Nukus and enhancing the air patrol and interdiction capabilities of Uzbekistan's Ministry of Defense and Border Guards. The United States continues to work with Kazakhstan on the conversion of the former biological warfare facilities in Stepnogorsk into a technology park.

Overall, the capacity of the Central Asian states to cooperate on traditional military-security issues on a regional basis were severely limited in the beginning of 1990s by the process of state building. However, the last initiatives of Kazakhstan and the achievements of the Shanghai Forum have been successful in establishing mutual understanding and trust in the region, as well as promoting broad structures to coordinate the regional states' position on functional security concerns, such as nuclear weapons, separatism, terrorism, drugs and weapons proliferation, and this kind of cooperation is likely to continue. Unfortunately, the discrepancies between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan delay cooperation, not only in the area of security, but also in other spheres. Uzbekistan's decision to close the border and erect tariff barriers along with its refusal to cooperate on transportation questions is particularly illogical. Why deny farmers in southern Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan access to markets, when these very same farmers would then have the income to purchase goods from Uzbekistan? Traditions of cronyism and statistic control stifle the economic growth that arises from market reforms and regional economic cooperation. The examples show that these discrepancies emanate from Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan has tried several times to initiate the cooperation between the Central Asia states, but these initiatives were not supported by Uzbekistan's

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<sup>76</sup> Turko Dikaev, "Russia to Cede Control of Historic Border," *IWPR's Reporting Central Asia*, No. 284, May 15, 2004.

government. Examples of every Central Asia country's views on the cooperation between them will be expressed later. U.S. assistance only intensifies this problem, especially after the opening of military bases in Uzbekistan. For example, one day U.S. State department may freeze the U.S. assistance for the Central Asian states because of the human rights violations, and the next day a U.S. high-ranking military official may provide assistance for Uzbekistan's armed forces because of the support of the war against terrorism. This kind of inconsistent policy only enlarges the tensions among the states in the regions.

Consequently, Central Asia is a very complex region that requires special attention to its problems. The U.S. military presence in Central Asia has profoundly affected the strategic situation in the region. China, Russia, and the United States are the three most influential powers in Central Asia. Central Asia is the only region in the world where all these three countries have formed a tripartite balance of forces there.

China, Russia, and the United States all regard Central Asia as a region of major strategic interests and all three countries will maintain a long-term presence there. How to handle relations between these three countries in the future will be a major strategic topic.<sup>77</sup>

The U.S. policy in Central Asia has been very successful. However, many problematic issues still remain to be resolved. The centuries-long tradition of autocratic rule, capped by Soviet totalitarianism, still influences the thinking of many. No country in the region has held a free and fair democratic election. Moreover, attempts by governments to curtail political activity through spurious or selective prosecutions, and through removing opposition candidates from the ballot are common.

Meanwhile, the difference in the political development of the states in the region are striking.

Uzbeks still sometimes describe their country as an open prison, but traveling from there to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan the change of atmosphere is palpable: human rights activists are more vocal and the media more independent. Political opposition in Kazakhstan is probably

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<sup>77</sup> Zhao Huasheng, "Can China, Russia, and the United States Cooperate in Central Asia?" PRC Scholar Views Prospects for Sino-Russian-US Cooperation in Central Asia, Beijing, Zhanlue Yu Guanli, in Chinese, March 1, 2004, No. 2, p. 34.

the most effective in the region. A foreign diplomat based in Almaty says that if you compare Kazakhstan's human-rights and political record and that of some of its neighbors, Kazakhstan comes out way ahead.<sup>78</sup>

In addition, Kazakhstan has recently adopted a new liberal elections law that meets OSCE standards.

It is very important for the United States to promote cooperation between the five nations of the region. In doing so, it is necessary to understand the economic, security, internal and foreign policy differences between all Central Asian states. Analyzing the situation in the region and the policies of each of the five republics, Erica Iskakova, Research Associate at the Institute for regional studies (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan), proposes the following table.

	<b>Economy and politics</b>	<b>National military</b>	<b>Intensity of internal threats</b>	<b>Type of security policy</b>
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Reformist	Strong	Low	<b>Conductive</b>
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	Reformist	Weak	Medium	<b>Conductive</b>
<b>Tajikistan</b>	Reformist	Weak	High	<b>Conductive</b>
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	Statist	Strong	High	<b>Preventive</b>
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Statist	Strong	High	<b>Preventive</b>

Table 1. Cooperation Conductive and Preventive Security Policies in the Central Asian States.<sup>79</sup>

The type of security policy in the table reflects the will of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to cooperate. It is understandable that weaker states such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have more incentives towards regional cooperation because, for them, national sovereignties are better protected in alliances. Both states simply lack the resources to support and develop military potential. Activities within alliances, even if done at the cost of suppressed national interests, promise to be more effective than the mobilization of an internal military.

<sup>78</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," The Economist, July 26, 2003, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Erica Marat Iskakova, "Incoherency in Central Asian Security Policies: Alliances and Trade-Offs," ASN 2004 Convention University of Columbia, April 15, 2004.

Turkmenistan is a separate case because of the concentration of power in the hands of one man, and it is unlikely that there will be any changes in the state's policy, while Niyazov and his family rule the country.

In estimating the security threats the military man looks at the capabilities of other states rather than at their intentions. Intentions are political in nature, inherently fickle and changeable, and virtually impossible to evaluate and predict... Human nature being what it is, a stronger state should never be trusted even if it proclaims the friendliest intentions. If a state has the power to injure one's own security, it is necessary to assume that it will do so.<sup>80</sup>

This situation is exactly what has happened in the case of Uzbekistan. The Uzbek military has always been more numerous and superior in terms of technical equipment compared to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan was capable of intervening in a civil war in Tajikistan and an armed conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan in the late 1990's, by explaining that it was in the interests of protecting national security interests. It was rational for the Uzbek military to intervene in a conflict and defend national security interests autonomously rather than consolidating military resources with weaker states. Initiating better security relations with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan meant bargaining and adjusting mutual national interests, information and justification of security goals. The trade-off for Uzbekistan was greater if it chose to invest more resources in security relations instead of handling national military. The regional hegemonic nature of Uzbekistan is best described by these examples of non-sanctioned activities. Unfortunately, the United States, after establishing military bases in Uzbekistan, tries to turn to a blind eye to many aspects of Uzbekistan's internal and external policies, which are mentioned in this thesis.

Kazakhstan has been active in security cooperation with its neighbors even though the country's domestic stability is rarely at risk from internal security problems as the republic has the strongest economy in the region, and its military has vast potential. The trade-offs in military cooperation are minimal for Kazakhstan since it always has the ability to choose if its involvement in resolving regional security problems is necessary

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<sup>80</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "The Soldier and the State," The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London, England, p. 66.

and to what extent. This will of Kazakhstan to develop cooperation between the five states of Central Asia needs external support. Currently, the United States is the force that may successfully influence this process, and, it is the author's belief that cooperation between the countries of the region will serve U.S. interests as well. Unfortunately,

regional jealousies, rivalries, and competition have kept them [Central Asian states] from even the most basic measures of self-protection. They cannot agree on the formation of a joint security belt, much less a common Central Asian market that would have a chance to improve the well-being of their people.<sup>81</sup>

Also note that 2003 and 2004 have been the first period since independence in 1991 during which no bilateral meetings between any of the Central Asian presidents occurred outside of a larger forum, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or CIS summit.

It's a disappointment, because you would, as an outsider, say one thing that would really assist all the five states is integration first within the region. It's not a small part of the world. It's a good chunk of the Eurasian land mass and when you imagine them pooling their resources -- again, whether it's political or economic -- together that would make their voice stronger. And that's exactly what such a landlocked and historically out-of-the-way region needs.<sup>82</sup>

All Central Asian countries except Turkmenistan (which has declared itself neutral) have embraced the United States as an important ally, but most still consider Russia as a strategic partner. The rival between Uzbekistan (the most populous) and Kazakhstan (the largest) adds another layer of complication, as does the contempt in which the region's presidents are said to hold each other.

“Regional cooperation in Central Asia has been, in the words of a foreign diplomat, “an abject failure”. Until there is sufficient political will in the countries concerned to work together, outsiders will not be able to persuade them to do so. For example, a great deal of foreign money and effort has been poured into sorting out the region's water supplies over the past decade without much to show for it.

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<sup>81</sup> Ahmed Rashid, “Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia,” Yale University Press, USA, 2002, p. 11.

<sup>82</sup> Bruce Pannier, “2003 & Beyond: Five Different Futures Await Five Central Asian States,” Asia Times Online, December 19, 2003.

There are, however, a few hopeful signs. Kazakhstan has recently agreed to start paying Kyrgyzstan for the maintenance dam and reservoirs on the Chu river. This may set a precedent for similar agreements on the Amu Darya, although Uzbekistan remains opposed to anything of the sort.<sup>83</sup> Kazakhstan's will to promote regional cooperation is a good sign, but it needs support, and, of course, much work will be needed to weave such initiatives into a coherent whole. Ultimately, it is Uzbekistan that holds the key to regional cooperation whether over security issues, water, trade or borders.

Thus, the challenges of the transition process in Central Asia are far greater than in Eastern Europe and some of the European parts of the former Soviet Union. The considerable strategic interests of the United States in Central Asia counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, energy, the integration of this isolated and long-dominated region into the world community, and the expansion of freedom and prosperity should not be temporary. Continuing U.S. assistance through the Freedom Support Act and other assistance is essential in promoting U.S. interests in Central Asia. The hope is that by working together with Central Asian republics, the United States will continue to be a force of positive change in the region.

### **C. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND KAZAKHSTAN'S FOREIGN SECURITY POLICY**

Questions about legitimacy and impartiality are relevant in considering security structures in Central Asia sponsored by external or regional powers, which are likely to seek to project their interests into the region even if they may share the objective of promoting regional stability with the Central Asian states. In turn, the security structures in Central Asia sponsored by the Central Asian states themselves are liable to suffer from ineffectiveness as a result of differences and rivalries between these states.

Under these circumstances, the engagement of broader international organizations is viewed by Kazakhstan as desirable for the management of security in the region.

Since independence, President Nazarbayev has tried to use international support. To do this he has traveled widely in an effort to secure a place for Kazakhstan as a bridge between East and West, between Europe and Asia. Although, Nazarbayev had begun making independent foreign policy contacts for Kazakhstan before independence, the new republic's status as

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<sup>83</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 10.

a nuclear power gained it international attention. Almost immediately on its declaration of independence the republic gained a seat in the United Nations, membership in the fifty-two-member Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and a seat on the NATO coordinating council.<sup>84</sup>

In addition, Kazakhstan has been granted membership in such organizations as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OEC), which unites Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Central Asian countries, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. In 1992, Kazakhstan concluded an agreement on technical co-operation with the European Union (EU), which has a representative of its own in Almaty. In 1995, Kazakhstan joined the NATO “Partnership for Peace” Program.

Central Asia has been a region of concern for the United Nations and OSCE. These organizations have been engaged in the region through their efforts at mediation in the conflicts in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, through information offices in the Central Asian capitals, and through humanitarian aid. However, neither the UN, nor the OSCE has demonstrated the necessary collective political will to act decisively in situations of violent conflict in Central Asia. Neither organization has been in a position to offer any explicit security guarantees to Central Asia states.

To discuss the issues of cooperation with the UN, Deputy Minister of Defense, Major General Sembinov and the author, visited the UN Headquarters in January 2003. After meetings with several officials in Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), it was agreed to start preparing Kazakhstan’s officers and units for participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Since then, the author has been in touch with DPKO representatives, but has succeeded only in sending four officers from Kazakhstan to short UN courses in India and Sri Lanka. All the main agreements still remain on paper.

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<sup>84</sup> Olcott, Martha Brill, “The Kazakh,” Stanford University, California, 1995, p. 283.

At the beginning of 2003, one of the author's deputies was appointed to be the Defense Attaché to Austria as well as Kazakhstan's military representative in OSCE. He has also produced a great deal of paperwork, establishing contacts with OSCE officials, but there have been no practical results.

The fact that Kazakhstan has established working contacts on the level of experts and elaborated some plans on cooperation within the framework of the UN, DPKO and OSCE on security issues is already in progress. However, the question remains of whether there may be a more effective way to gain the aforementioned organizations' support in sharing tasks and responsibilities that might contribute to the strengthening of regional and global security.

The growing engagement of competing regional powers in Central Asia, threats arising from Afghanistan and their broad international implications, and the risks of the escalation of local conflicts within and between the Central Asian countries, all suggest that more coordinated international efforts are required for the purpose of international confidence building, conflict prevention and the post-conflict rehabilitation (in Tajikistan). The UN and the OSCE are in the best position to encourage cooperation between states and regional grouping located or engaged in Central Asia towards this end.<sup>85</sup>

Kazakhstan's cooperation with NATO in the area of providing security in the region has been more successful. As stated previously, Kazakhstan joined NATO's PfP program in 1995. Kazakhstan was able to gain significant experience and contacts with NATO nations military establishment through PfP. For "...NATO the program also offered a unique venue for fostering a greater integration of these [Central Asian] states with western political and military institutions."<sup>86</sup>

At the Defense Minister's sessions of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), in December 2001, Kazakhstan's Minister of Defense Altynbaev stated,

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<sup>85</sup> Allison Roy, "Policy Cooperation in Central Asia" in Allison Roy and Lena Johnson, "Central Asian Security: The New International Context," Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001, p. 242.

<sup>86</sup> Richard Giragosian and Roger N. McDermott, "US Military Engagement in Central Asia: "Great Game" or "Great Gain?" November 2003, p. 3.

Kazakhstan considers participation in EAPC and PfP program as one of priorities of cooperation aimed to integration into global security structures. Kazakhstan took political decision about joining the Planning and Review Process program (PARP) which will allow us to increase the level of relations with NATO.

In the following year, in June 2002, Kazakhstan was the first among Central Asian countries to join the PARP.

In July 2003, NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson visited Kazakhstan.

Whilst generally praising Kazakhstan for its increasingly deepening cooperation with the Alliance, Robertson particularly thanked President Nazarbayev and the Kazakh parliament for deciding to offer ...troops in support of post-war reconstruction in Iraq. This development clearly signals Astana's commitment to its cooperation with NATO, contributing to the stabilization forces within Iraq, despite the international controversy that surrounded the US decision to prosecute the war. However, this is only a small part of growing evidence that Astana is actively pursuing a more pro-western approach to its foreign policy and military cooperation.<sup>87</sup>

In the author's opinion, it is very strong evidence of changes in Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the area of security toward the West, and, first of all, toward the United States. None of Kazakhstan's great neighbors, neither Russia nor China supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Also, none of the states in the region were brave enough to send their troops to support the allied forces in Iraq. Kazakhstan was the only one. Uzbekistan also had an offer on the table to provide a 135-man peacekeeping and medical battalion, but eventually refused to deploy its military personnel to Iraq. Kazakhstan's effort to deploy an engineering platoon may not appear so significant, but by analyzing the political situation in the region and threats of terrorist attacks, and religious extremist groups in Central Asia, it should be considered a very strong shift in Kazakhstan's foreign policy with the West. Indeed, U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell during talks in Washington D.C. with Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister, Kasymzhomart Tokayev, praised the significant role of Kazbat, and the politically principled stand taken by

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<sup>87</sup> Roger N. McDermott, "The Kazakh Military Looks West," *Central Asia - Caucasus Analyst*, July 16, 2003.

Kazakhstan over Iraq.<sup>88</sup> The contingent itself has done much since the time it was deployed. Taking into account peculiarities and the environment in Iraq, only military personnel with Muslim roots or background were selected for this mission, which has also played a role in the success of the Kazakhstani contingent in Iraq.

Its success can be attested to in gaining sufficient trust amongst locals to receive information on the location of ordnance left over from the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). [For the first six months]...the unit has cleared away more than 400,000 explosives and continues fulfilling successfully its missions. As [Minister] Altynbaev once noted, in addition, the Detachment helps in solving another important problem: achieving interoperability [with NATO].<sup>89</sup>

Developing further cooperation with NATO Minister Altynbaev at the Defense Minister's sessions of the EAPC, on 2 December 2003, proposed to create PfP structures in Kazakhstan. "These structures, with taking into account the unique geopolitical location of Kazakhstan, internal stability in the country, consent among ethnic groups and religions, will inevitably move forward our possibilities in the struggle against terrorism."

Ultimately, the growing cooperation between Kazakhstan and NATO is becoming one of the main tools of strengthening internal and regional security and stability. In addition, it has greatly impacted Kazakhstan's evolving foreign policy in the area of security.

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<sup>88</sup> "Kazakh Foreign Minister, US Secretary of State, Mull Ties, Iraq," Interfax Kazakhstan News Agency, Almaty, June 3, 2004.

<sup>89</sup> Roger N. McDermott and Igor Mukhamedov, "Kazakhstan's Peacekeeping Support in Iraq," Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst, January 28, 2004.

## IV. CONCLUSION

In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan as an independent state refused to have any elements of nuclear weapons on its territory, and started building internal, regional stability and foreign security policy, based not on force performance, but on building partnership relations with neighbors and other interested in developing relations with Kazakhstan nations. Kazakhstan's security initiatives and active participation in international security organization have been a valuable contribution to strengthening not only regional, but also global security.

Entering the new millennium the world faced new threats and challenges. The tragic events in the beginning of the new century opened a new era, denoted by the struggle against terrorism. It changed the whole concept of military reform in many countries in the Post-Soviet space, first of all, in Central Asian states. The military reform and international relations development in the Republic of Kazakhstan is a bright example of "big" changes. Since 2001 the cooperation of Kazakhstan with NATO nations and with the United States in particular has remarkably increased. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan is going to continue developing good relations with its great neighbors, Russia and China, and will support regional initiatives that can provide security in the region. In addition, Kazakhstan expressed its readiness and willingness to be involved in the UN peacekeeping activities, tried to build arc of stability in the region along with its neighbors and started developing more close cooperation with Western Nations and international organizations.

In his annual address to the people of Kazakhstan in March 2004, President Nazarbayev stated:

It is important to say that we collaborate with our Shanghai Cooperation Organization partners and the Collective Security Treaty. We are following the plan in developing our relations with NATO and leading world powers. The strategic task of our defense is to arm the Kazakh army with modern weapons and equipment.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> "Kazakhstani Military Prepares to Rise to New Challenges," *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, Astana, March 26, 2004.

Energy resources is another area of competition between the big powers. There are all grounds needed to convert this competition into cooperation. Russia should not expect the United States cooperation on counterterrorism if it blocks the U.S. oil companies from developing the country and prevents Kazakhstan from choosing the routes it wants to use to export its energy.

China, whose energy needs will be stupendous in the next decade, should join with the United States and Russia to create oil company consortium that would not just offer new energy sources, but would show the country's leadership that they can no longer exploit differences between the big powers to avoid desperately needed reforms at home. This sort of cooperation will lead to the development of democracy in the republic.

Kazakhstan also pays much attention to regional cooperation. The lack of cooperation in the region is partly the result of the Soviet heritage. The dislocation created by a difficult transition from socialism to a market economy has swelled the rank of the poor; and arbitrary borders, the destruction of a common identity and unbalanced water management have fostered regional divisions. Right now, the nations of the region can hardly resolve these issues by themselves.

The United States, Russia and China have all been keen to boost the region's security system, which collapsed with the Soviet Union and has not been replaced. Regional security treaties have been signed, but none seems to offer much comfort. The Central Asian countries failed to back their promises with recourses. The Collective Security Treaty of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) covers only part of the region and has proved fairly ineffective. Still, an anti-terrorist centre and a rapid-deployment force of sorts have been set up, and joint military exercises are conducted regularly. In April, 2003, members met in Dushanbe to strengthen the treaty, but not much is likely to happen. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, made up of China, Russia and the Central Asian countries except Turkmenistan, was set up to deal with border issues, but has recently concentrated on anti-terrorist measures.

Regional tensions, uneven military capabilities and different perceptions of security threats – and how deal with them – have undermined attempts to rebuild collective security. Nor does it help that Central Asian foreign-policy priorities are at

odds. Uzbekistan has been wary of what it sees as Russia's attempts to regain lost ground in the region, and is firmly putting itself on America's side. Turkmenistan has chosen neutrality and isolation. Uzbekistan quit the CIS Collective Security Treaty in 1999, and Turkmenistan refused to join in the first place. The other has been keen to be friends with the United States, Russia and China all at once.

Throughout the region, security relies mainly on bilateral arrangements. Since the war in Afghanistan, the United States has been maintaining military bases in the region. It also provides non-lethal military assistance and training to the Central Asian countries and is supporting anti-drugs programs and anti-terrorist measures. However, the U.S. policy of helping Central Asia's governments combat terrorism while mildly lecturing them on their human rights violations has not constituted a strategic vision for the region. Such a vision demands that military assistance should be coupled with economic aid and incentives. The West needs a strategy that considers the region as a whole rather than a series of local problems.

For example, the West could not join the fight against IMU without acknowledging the worsening situation in Afghanistan and the fact that thousands of Kashmiri and Pakistani militants have trained in Kabul along with IMU. To the untrained Western eye the region may have appeared to be a patchwork of different states, ethnic groups, and interests, but the conflict showed a growing unity amongst the dissidents and a common sense of purpose. The various militants fed off one another, supported one another, and became increasingly intertwined both militarily and ideologically. Pakistani anti-Shia groups joined the Taliban and the IMU to give themselves "jihadi" credentials, whilst the IMU fought for Taliban, and bin Laden's Arabs fought for everyone.<sup>91</sup>

The Russians have been eager to gain more of a presence in their traditional back yard, and some analyses think their influence is bound to increase, not only for geographical reasons, but also because of historical and cultural links.

China's security interests in the region are influenced by the problems with its own Uighur separatists in western China, and are focused on border control and anti-terrorism.

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<sup>91</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia," Yale University Press, USA, 2002, pp. 232-233.

So, what are the prospects for Central Asia? The best hope is that the next generation of leaders will be compromise candidates acceptable to both the outgoing presidents and to the opposition. Such gradual transition would allow to be genuinely reformed and for the opposition to get into shape before democratic elections are held. This could well happen in Kazakhstan, and possibly in Kyrgyzstan too.

Both countries have introduced useful economic reforms, but to make these fully effective they also need to separate political power and business interests, free their press and make their courts more independent.

In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, this sort of gradual change could be a long time coming, and require another interim generation of leaders. Alternatively, change could come much more abruptly, perhaps violently, as foreshadowed by an alleged assassination attempt on Turkmenistan's president in November, 2002. And in Tajikistan, the civil war is likely to take a while longer to get over the country feels it can afford a real opposition.<sup>92</sup>

Such big differences among the Central Asian states make the regional cooperation more problematic. Region, definitely, needs support of the West, and first of all, of the United States in promotion regional initiatives.

Nevertheless, the new military reform, started in 2003, required new approaches, new views on training and new equipment compatible with NATO standards. In addition, as it was highlighted by a United Kingdom defense official, in order to move forward in cooperation with the West, first of all, Kazakhstan needs to reform its security laws, which currently inhibit certain information with NATO; and, secondly, Kazakhstan ought to spend more money on defense reform.<sup>93</sup>

The view that Kazakhstan needs to dedicated more funds for security is shared with many Western experts.

Kazakhstan is simply not spending enough money on its armed forces, accounting for around 1% of GDP. Kazakhstan's political leadership could certainly prioritize the military reform issue, but in so doing it must resolve any uncertainties relating to pleasing both Russia and seeking

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<sup>92</sup> "A Survey of Central Asia," *The Economist*, July 26, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>93</sup> Author's Interview with a UK's Defence Official in the UK Ministry of Defense, London, July 2004.

closer ties with NATO. If it is to break free from the Soviet legacy in its armed forces, with its culture of corruption, privilege, and sloth among senior officers, it can only look to the example of other former Soviet militaries and Warsaw Pact members that have made a successful transition to more efficient militaries. Kazakhstan's recent reform initiatives suggest the timescale for reform will be slow and painstaking.<sup>94</sup>

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defence understand the necessity of changes. "As far as weaponry is concerned, we should get the best, no matter how expensive it is, because we should have the weaponry which meet international standards and NATO standards, so that we do not have certain problems while cooperating."<sup>95</sup>

There is no doubt that Kazakhstan has to do a lot to succeed in the reforming of its security structures. After the tragic events in September 2004 in Osetia (Russia), President Nazarbayev declared that military spending, first of all, spending for anti-terrorist activities and border security, would be significantly increased.<sup>96</sup> The directions of military reform and development of military cooperation also show that Kazakhstan pays more attention to its South and West. Attention to the western area of the country was demanded as a result of the growing importance of the Caspian Sea to the various regional powers; and the south also necessitated further attention, owing to the crisis in Afghanistan and the awareness of the dangers of Islamic militancy.

The concept of building small and mobile armed forces conflicts with the old Soviet methodology of military force structure and doctrine, and, consequently, changes Kazakhstan's approach towards building relations with both "great" neighbors, and the West. How far Kazakhstan will go in the direction of deepening its relations with the West mainly depends upon the U.S. policy in the region. There is a willingness of Kazakhstan to build its Navy, Air and Air Defense forces, as well as reforming its Airmobile force in accordance with NATO standards. Today, it is impossible for Kazakhstan to achieve this without external assistance. The necessary assistance of NATO and its member countries depends very much on the U.S. position, and since

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<sup>94</sup> Roger McDermott, "Kazakhstan's Military Reform Creeps Forward," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 1 Issue 71 (August 11, 2004).

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Kazakhstan's Minister of Defense M. Altynbaev, Khabar Television, March 27, 2004, Almaty.

<sup>96</sup> Speech of President N. Nazarbayev, Khabar TV Channel, September 6, 2004, Astana.

Kazakhstan has started utilizing U.S. equipment, albeit in smaller quantities, the U.S. assistance itself is very essential, also. When Kazakhstan obtains enough equipment to operate the above-mentioned forces, it could become the West's strategic partner in the region and globally.

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